

***LOOKING FOR
THE
BOOK OF WISDOM***



SHAMIM A SIDDIQI

IN THE NAME OF GOD, THE BENEFICENT, THE MERCIFUL

L O O K I N G F O R

T H E B O O K

O F

W I S D O M

[REMINDE - THROUGH THE QUR'AN]

S H A M I M A S I D D I Q I

ICNA PUBLICATION

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- Published By** : Islamic Circle of North America,
166-26 89th. Ave., Jamaica,
New York - 11432
Phone: (718) 739 -7300
- Shamim Siddiqi** : “Looking for The Book of Wisdom”
Address : 140-11 Ash Avenue, #5A
Flushing, N Y 11355
Phone :9718) 961-7708
e-mail : Tsidd96472@AOL.COM
- I S B N** : O - 9625301 - 7 - 4
- Price** : \$4.50
- Printed By** : Advanced Xpress Printing
888 S. Greenville, Suite - 301
Richardson, TX - 75081

D E D I C A T I O N

I

DEDICATE THIS BOOK

TO

THOSE BROTHERS AND SISTERS

WHO

INVITE THE PEOPLE TO THE FOLD OF THEIR CREATOR

THROUGH THE QUR'AN

[AS ORDAINED BY GOD]

“.....But warn by the Qur'an him who fear My warning”

[The Qur'an - 50 : 45]

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IN THE NAME OF GOD, THE BENEFICENT, THE MERCIFUL**P R E F A C E**

Humanity is passing through crisis after crisis. The problems which humanity is facing are increasing by leaps and bounds. Humanity is suffocating and desperately looking all around to find a way to overcome this situation. In spite of vast developments in the fields of science and technology, means of communication and transportation, living conditions and personal comfort, the growth of human society still remains lopsided : A vast multitude of human beings are grappling with the most primitive life-style while a few millions are living in utter luxuries. A billion people on the surface of the earth are not even able to get two square meals a day. Discrimination on account of race, culture, language, color and religion is rampant. The gulf between rich and poor is on constant increase. The poor and the underdeveloped nations of the world are losing confidence in the big nations. The game of double standard, exploitation and domination of weaker nations by the giants is going on unabated in different pattern, forms and disguises. And, as a result, human sufferings know no bound.

The world, no doubt, has shrunk and become a house of around 188 inmates [nations], but behold its condition where only a few of its inmates are happy and prosperous. The rest are lamenting and crying under their ever-increasing burden of debt, poverty and deprivation. Can we call it a balanced growth, a harmonious situation, or a state of peace? The situation is alarming. The people who are dreaming to be leaders of mankind early in the twenty first century should think, will they be able to fulfill their aspiration, if the great majority of the human race is crying under inhuman conditions? They cannot live long in prosperity, if their fellow human beings in different parts of the world are living in a constant siege of deprivation and appalling conditions.

This horrible situation around the world demands from each sane element of the society to ponder over the sad plight of humanity and think how can it be resolved? How can man achieve a harmonious growth and lead a balanced life on earth? How can the dragon of discrimination be killed and the bitterness of exploitation be eradicated? How can human beings establish justice in every walk of life? These are very challenging questions which human society, specially the intelligentsia, must resolve,

before it claims to have progressed. The progress, that we see today, is limping, lopsided, nationalistic, and full of greed and selfishness. It is self-centered, short-sighted and based on exploitation of others. Sooner or later, this attitude is going to backfire. Human tolerance has a limit and when it will reach the limit, it will blow up. That will be a very bad day for the dominant races, cultures and nations. That will be the day of their accountability. This situation must be corrected before it is too late.

The world does not belong to any special people or race or community. It belongs to the Creator, Sustainer and the Law Giver. It is controlled by rules which are set, firm and unchangeable. It is created for the entire human race to explore, exploit and use for the benefit of mankind. No one has the right to monopolize these resources and dictate terms to others. The natural resources should and must equally be shared by all the people and nations. Then only a just life will be possible for the human race to lead a harmonious life on earth.

Besides this equitable distribution of natural resources, man needs proper teachings and guidance on how to live, behave and act on earth and how to deal with his own species. In short, he should know how to live like a human being, caring and mindful of others. He also needs a guide and a model to follow, because history proves that whenever he is left to lead a life of his own, he has filled the earth with exploitation, chaos and bloodshed by usurping the rights of others. The Creator is fully aware of this anomalous position of man. He, therefore, from the very inception of humanity arranged to send both the guidance and the guide to demonstrate how to live and behave on earth. God wants peace to prevail on His earth. He does not like transgression or any disturbance in the equilibrium of the human society.

Out of continuous chain of His appointed Messengers and the Books of Guidance which God sent for the betterment of human society, now only the Qur'an is available intact, without any change or human innovation. The life-pattern of Prophet Muhammad is also available intact and in its minutest detail to be followed as a model and guide. **The Qur'an is the last Book of Wisdom** which gives a vivid description of the guiding principles for men and women to live on earth in peace and tranquillity. In the following pages, I have tried to elucidate some selected Verses in order to put some glimpses of the Qur'anic Wisdom to our readers.

The Qur'an vividly describes: the position of man on earth, the commitment of God to send the guidance as and when needed by man,

the criteria of success and failure, the conditions of rise and fall, what can man get and what he cannot, continuity of guidance and the prophethood, integrity of family system, human rights and their protection, the maximization of personal pleasure and many more points of wisdom and knowledge in different fields which humanity needs for its salvation and solution of its die-hard problems. I have tried to give just a glimpse of the system of life which the Qur'an promotes to establish peace and justice in the midst of human complexities.

It is for the readers to think and ponder over the precarious situation of our existing world which I have briefly depicted above and see how Islam resolves the situation in its own way. **The Qur'an spells out the basic principles and a comprehensive plan towards the salvation of human society. If the reader decides to find out by himself or herself what the Qur'an, the Book of Guidance, contains, it will be provided to him/her on request. If he/she resolves to remodel his or her life in terms of the Guidance contained in that Book of Wisdom, he/she will be the wisest on this earth.**

Before I conclude, I would like to thank my beloved Brothers, Dr. Erdogan Gurmen [and his learned wife], Dr. Omar Afzal and Shamsheer A Baig for their valuable advise and suggestions to present the "Wisdom of the Qur'an" in the briefest and most cohesive way. May Allah bless each of them. Equally, I am thankful to my sons Javed and Tariq and my nephew, Anwer Adil, for their important contribution through computer. May Allah reward them immensely. I would also like to acknowledge with extreme sense of gratitude the silent contribution which my wife, Shamim Razia, made during the last 35 years which enabled me to devote my total time and energy towards struggling in the path of Allah. May Allah shower His blessing on her and continue this companionship till I breath my last.

At the end, I can only pray to God , the Almighty, to guide the readers to arrive at the rightful decision to go through the Qur'an and gain the knowledge and wisdom from its every word.

O God! Open their hearts and minds, grace them with your Mercy to re-set their lives accordingly. May God give them the courage to rise against the prevailing false and concocted prejudices and propaganda against the Qur'an, Islam and the life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). What a great tragedy it is that the "enlightened" men and women of the

twentieth century are scared of what is the panacea of all of their ills, prejudices and transgressions! I request each of my reader that, if they are 'looking for' the Book of Wisdom' they should go through the Qur'an, and find out in his or her own way : **where lies the truth which you, your family, your society and the humanity at large need so badly?** Your "success" lies in finding the correct answer to this paramount question of your life. May God bless those brothers and sisters who resolve to struggle and find out the Path of Righteousness. My best prayers and wishes are with each of you.

New York
October 25, 1997

Shamim A Siddiq

**IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE BENEFICENT, THE
MERCIFUL**

INTRODUCTION

HUMAN PITFALLS

Human society, in its march towards progress and search for perfection through ages, has reached the stage where it thinks that :

- * Humans can achieve what they like;
- * They are masters of their destiny;
- * They themselves can deliver a code of conduct as to how to live, act and behave on this earth;
- * The life on this earth is the only life and there is no life after death;
- * They are accountable to none.

AS A RESULT :

- * They deny the existence of any Supreme authority;
- * They are trying to maximize the pleasure of their wordly life;
- * Their life, both individual and collective, has become unbalanced;
- * They have become reckless, irresponsible and have filled the earth with injustices, disorder and bloodshed;
- * They are destroying the ecological balance through their own inventions, life-style and destructive policies and programs.

IS THERE ANY WAY OUT ? YES. BUT FIRST ENVISION THE PARADOX IN WHICH HUMANS AND HUMAN SOCIETY HAVE BEEN ENTRAPPED ON THEIR OWN ACCORD.

THE PARADOX :

- * They say that they are the masters whereas they are only trustees;
- * They say they can do and get what they like whereas they can get only what is destined for them;
- * They say this is the only life whereas there must be a life after death where they should be accountable for what they are doing on this earth, otherwise the entire creation becomes meaningless, an absurdity of great magnitude. The entire phenomenon becomes illogical;
- * They deny or ignore the existence of a Supreme authority, their Creator and Sustainer but have coined a new god by the name of, “Mother Nature” and attributing to it the characteristics of the true God;
- * They are ignoring the life-pattern of the perfect man on earth to follow as a model but are imitating the images of imperfect men and women around them who can lead them to nowhere except towards destruction and frustration.

Please judge by yourself where the human society stands today. These **pitfalls** are man’s own creation.

LET US SEE WHAT ARRANGEMENT THE CREATOR AND THE SUSTAINER HAS MADE FOR HUMANS AND HUMAN SOCIETY TO GET THEMSELVES OUT OF THESE SELF-CREATED QUAGMIRES AND TO LIVE IN PEACE AND HARMONY, BOTH IN AN INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE LIFE.

CHAPTER - I**THE POSITION OF MAN ON EARTH**

When Allah (God) created this universe and designed to place His vicegerent on earth, He created man and woman. He made a solemn commitment to send guidance to mankind through His appointed messengers as to how to live, act and behave on earth. This commitment was made to Adam/Eve, and through them to their progenies. The Qur'an depicts the details of this entire episode in the following Verses:

“ Remember when thy Lord said unto the angels : Lo! I am about to place a vicegerent on earth, they said : will thou place therein one who will do harm therein and will shed blood, while we (angels), hymn Thy praise and glorify Thee? He (the Lord) said : surely I know that which ye know not.”

“And He taught Adam names of every thing” [and thus God established the superiority of man over angels due to knowledge earmarked to him and his progenies].”

“And when We (The Lord) said unto the angles: Prostrate yourselves before Adam, they fell prostrate, all save Iblis (the Satan). He demurred through pride, and so became a disbeliever.”

And We (The Lord) said : O Adam! Dwell you and your wife in the Garden and eat ye freely (of the fruits) thereof where you will; but do not approach this tree, lest you become wrongdoers.”

“ But Satan caused them to deflect there and get them out of the (happy) state in which they were; and We (The Lord) said (to both of them - Adam and Eve) : Down with you [and be henceforth] enemies unto one another; and on earth you shall have your abode and livelihood for a while [for the duration of a life span which every individual human being will have].”

“ Adam received from His Lord words [of guidance] from His Sustainer. He accepted his repentance, verily, He alone is the Acceptor of Repentance and the Merciful.”

“ We (The Lord) said : Down with all of you, there shall, none-the-less, most certainly come unto you guidance from Me : and those who

will follow My guidance need have no fear, and neither shall they grieve; but those who disbelieve and deny Our revelations, they are destined for the fire, and therein shall they abide”.

[The Qur’an, Al-Baqara - 2 : 30-31 & 34-39]

And elsewhere in the Qur’an, some other details of the story are given. For the interest of the reader, they are narrated as follows :

“ And when We said unto the angels: Fall prostrate before Adam, they fell prostrate (all) save Iblis; he refused.”

“ Therefore We said: O Adam! This is an enemy unto thee and unto thy wife, so let him not drive you both out of the Garden so that you come to toil.”

“ It is provided unto thee that thou shall not hunger here nor feel naked.”

“ And thou shall not thirst here or suffer from the heat of the sun ”.

“ But the Devil whispered to him, saying: O Adam! Shall I show thee the tree of immortality and power that was not away?”

“ Then the two ate [of the fruit] thereof, and their upon they became conscious of their nakedness, and they began to hide by covering themselves with some of the leaves of the Garden. And Adam disobeyed his Sustainer, and thus did he fall into grievous error.”

“ Then his Lord chose him, and accepted his repentance and bestowed His guidance upon him.”

“ He said: Go down hence, both of you, one of you a foe unto the other. But if there come unto you from Me a guidance, then whoso follows My guidance, he will not go astray nor come to grief.”

“ But he who turns away from remembrance of Me, his shall be a life of narrow scope (depressed economy), and I shall bring him blind to the assembly on the Day of Resurrection.”

[The Qur’an - XX : 116 to 124]

THE TRUTH ABOUT CHRISTIANITY :

The aforesaid Verses from the Qur'an not only well established the position of man on earth as the vicegerent (Khalifa) of God, but very eloquently do away with some paramount beliefs of Christianity. These Verses categorically confirm that:

1. Adam and Eve committed the sin of disobedience to their Lord but when they repented, their Creator and Sustainer immediately pardoned them before they were sent to earth. So the concept of Original Sin and Vicarious Atonement appear to be human innovations.
2. The sin was committed by both Adam and Eve and both were pardoned. So women do not carry any legacy of that slip in heaven. Women are freed from the concept of any "inherited" sin. They are at par with men on all counts. Thus, the Qur'an exonerates the female sex from the tyranny of a constant dogma which undermines its position till doomsday.
3. Satan is the declared enemy of Adam and Eve and of their progenies till eternity. He mislead both. Though they both erred, Allah addressed Adam for this disobedience and not Eve.
4. It establishes the character of both Adam/Eve and that of Satan. Human beings are prone to commit mistakes, but being intelligent realize their mistakes and like to repent, and the Creator accepts their repentance. Satanic forces are the symbol of arrogance and obstinacy. They do not bend down to repent. These two characters are at loggerheads from the day of their creation and will remain at war with each other till the Day of Judgment. Human beings must always be aware of the eternal skirmishes between right and wrong, good and evil, and try to protect themselves from the pitfalls, tricks and traps of the Satanic forces, which they encounter every now and then in their day to day life. Only Allah and His mercy can protect and keep them on the path of righteousness.
5. As the sin of both Adam and Eve was pardoned by the Creator before their coming down to the earth, hence there was no necessity of sending any son of God to earth to be sacrificed on a cross for human sins.
6. These Verses vividly clarify the position of Adam and thereby the status of Prophet Jesus (Peace be upon them) as human beings and the messengers of God. Prophet Jesus (PBUH) was created without father the way Adam was created without father and mother.

“ Verily, in the sight of God, the nature of Jesus is as the nature of Adam, whom He created out of dust and said unto him, “Be” “and he is.” This is the truth from the Sustainer; be not, then, among the doubters!”

[The Qur’an - 3 : 59-60]

The first couple came to earth with clear Guidance from their Creator. But their progenies subsequently lost the guidance through human interpolations and innovations. Then God, as per His commitment, not only sent His new messengers to serve as guides and models for the people of the time but also updated the guidance. The newer guidance automatically replaced the previous guidance as it stood altered through human innovations. Whenever, during the pace of human history, mankind lost the guidance, God came to its rescue. New messengers were appointed and they came along with updated guidance from the Creator. Thus came prophets after prophets in succession to help mankind to live in peace and harmony. Thousands and thousands of prophets came to different parts of the world at different times and periods to deliver guidance and keep humanity obedient to the Creator and Sustainer. The most prominent of the Messengers of God after Adam were Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad (May God be pleased with them). The Qur’an describes this state of affairs of humanity very vividly in the following Verse:

“ Mankind were one community [in the beginning] and God sent unto them Prophets [whenever the guidance was lost] as bearers of good tidings and as warners and revealed therewith the Scripture [Guidance] with the truth that it might judge between mankind concerning that wherein they differed [due to human innovations in the guidance with lapse of time]. And only those upto whom [the Scripture] was given differed concerning it, after clear proof had come unto them, through hatred one of the other [the cause of making innovations]. And God by His will guided [by sending new Prophets and updating Guidance] those who believe unto the truth of that concerning which they differed. God guides whom He will unto a straight path.”

[The Qur’an - 2 : 213]

Thus, the Creator and Sustainer kept His commitment to send guidance when there was a need for it through His appointed Messengers. This process maintained the continuity of prophethood as well the continuity of guidance and the message itself, i.e. you all worship God alone (making no partner with Him), and live a life on this earth with fear and hope,

feeling always accountable to Him, and follow the Prophet of the time as guide and model. All the messengers of God have this common message to deliver to mankind.

“ And verily, We have raised in every nation a messenger,[proclaiming]: Serve Allah and shun false gods..... ”

[The Qur'an - 16 : 36]

“ Be, then, conscious of God, and pay heed unto me {the Prophet of the time}..... ”

[The Qur'an - 26 : 108, 110, 126, 131, 144, 150, 163, 179. All the Prophets have the same message]

Muhammad (PBUH) was the last Prophet of God and the Qur'an is the last Book of Guidance from Him. Since the Qur'an is free from any kind of innovation and is available in the original, in the same form and language in which it was first revealed to Prophet Muhammad, there was and there is no necessity of any prophet to come [after Muhammad] to earth for the guidance of humanity. The Qur'an is intact and is available everywhere on the surface of the earth in the original Arabic text in which it was revealed.

The Qur'an is now the Book of Guidance and the life of Prophet Muhammad is the model for humanity to follow till eternity. Now, the Salvation of humanity lies only in following both. Equally, the solution of human problems lies in implementing the teachings of the Qur'an in its totally on the pattern Prophet Muhammad (PBU) demonstrated to the world. Mankind has no other choice. It has reached to its dead-end, where all the man-made “isms” are lying buried on the death bed of history. Liberal democracy is also fast heading towards meeting the same fate within a few decades. So, sooner or later man has to turn his face towards the last Guidance, the Qur'an. Man's position on earth and the task assigned to him by His Creator as His vicegerent demand it. Please think over this phenomenon and come to the right decision through your own free will. The choice is yours.

Now, let us be crystal clear why Adam and Eve were sent to the earth? What was the purpose behind their creation and that of the human race? What facilities and arrangements were made for them? What power and weaknesses were bestowed upon them? What freedom was given to them and what restrictions were imposed on

their actions and deeds? What could they achieve on this earth and what could they not? To what heights could they rise and how low could they fall?

The Qur'an is extremely clear on all these aspects of human life. It not only clearly defines the status of man on earth, as illustrated so far, but also it defines his status in respect to all the questions raised above. I will restrict myself to the extent of quoting Verses from the Qur'an, and adding only a few comments here and there towards explanation where necessary.

1. THE OBJECTIVE OF CREATION - LIFE IS A TEST AND A TRIAL :

“ Has there[not] been an endless span of time before man [appeared -a time] when he was not yet a thing to be thought of ?”

“ Verily, it is We Who have created man out of a drop of sperm intermingled, so that We might try him [in his later life]: and therefore We made him a being endowed with hearing and sight.”

“ Verily, We have shown him the way [the Guidance] and [it rests with him to prove himself] either grateful or ungrateful.”

[The Qur'an - 76 : 1-3]

“ Blessed is He in Whose hand is the Sovereignty, and He has the power to will anything. He Who has created life and death so that He might put you to test [and thus so] which of you is best in conduct, and [make you realize that] He alone is Almighty, truly Forgiving.”

[The Qur'an - 67 : 1-2]

“ Behold, We have placed all that is in the earth by which We put men to a test: which of them best in conduct; and, verily, [in time] we shall reduce all that is on it to barren dust.”

[The Qur'an - 18 : 7-8]

“ He it is Who has placed you as vicegerent on earth and has exalted some of you in rank above others, so that He might try you by means of what He has bestowed upon you. Verily, the Sustainer is swift in retribution: yet behold, He is indeed much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace.”

[The Qur'an - 6 : 165]

“ He it is Who has made you vicegerent on the earth: so he who disbelieves [God's oneness] ought to know that his denial will fall back upon him: their [persistent] denial of this truth does but add to the denier's loathsomeness in their Sustainer's sight. Their denial increases for the disbelievers naught save loss”.

[The Qur'an - 35 : 39]

2. GOD HARNESSSED EVERYTHING FOR MEN/WOMEN TO MEET THEIR NATURAL OR PHYSICAL INSTINCTS/URGES WITH A FREEWILL TO USE THEM AT HIS/HER DISCRETION-THE WAY HE/SHE LIKES OR THE WAY THE SUSTAINER ORDAINS. THIS IS THE LIFE-LONG TEST AND FOR THAT HE/SHE IS ACCOUNTABLE TO THE SUSTAINER AFTER DEATH.

“ ARE YOU NOT aware that God has made subservient to you all that is in the heavens [sky] and all that is on earth, and has lavished upon you His blessings [favours], both outward and inward?” And yet, among men there is many a one that argues about God without having any knowledge [of Him], without any guidance, and without any light-giving revelations; and when such [people] are told to follow that which God has revealed, they answer. Nay, we shall follow that which we found our forefathers believing in and doing.!

Why - [would you follow your forefathers] even if Satan had invited them into the suffering of the blazing flame?”

[The Qur'an -31 : 20-21]

“ IT IS GOD who has made the sea subservient [to His laws, so that it be of use] to you - so that ships might sail through it at His behest, and that you might seek to obtain [what you need] of His bounty, and that you might have cause to be grateful.

And He has made subservient to you [as a gift] from Himself, all that is in the heavens and on earth: in this, behold, there are messages indeed for people who think.”

[The Qur'an - 45 : 12-13]

3. BOUNTIES OF GOD OVER HUMANS :

“ Let man, then, consider [the sources of] his food: How We pour water in showers; then split the earth in clefts; and cause the grain to grow therein; and grapes and green fodder; and olive-trees and palm-trees; and garden dense with foliage; and fruits and grasses - provision for you and your cattle.”

[The Qur’an - 80 : 24 -32]

*“ SAY : Who is it that provides you with sustenance out of heaven and earth, and Who is it that has full power over [your]hearing and sight? And Who is it that brings forth the living out of that which is dead. And brings forth the dead out of that which is alive? And Who is it that governs all that exists?
And they will [surely] answer, ‘It [is] God’*

Such then is Allah, your rightful Lord; for, after the Truth [has been forsaken], what is there [left] but error? How, then, can you lose sight of the Truth?”

[The Qur’an - 10 : 31-32]

“ O Mankind! Worship your Sustainer, who has created you and those who lived before you, so that you remain conscious of Him Who has made the earth a resting-place for you and the sky a canopy, and has sent down water from the sky and thereby brought forth fruits for your sustenance: do not, then, claim that there is any power that could rival God, when you know [that He is One].”

[The Qur’an - 2 : 21-22]

4. THE ATTAINMENT OF HUMAN URGES/DESIRES THROUGH FREEWILL OR FREE CHOICE IS RESTRICTED OR CONTROLLED BY TWO CONDITIONS - THERE IS NO “FREE LUNCH” FROM GOD.

i. “ And that human kind will have only that for which he [or she] makes efforts;

*And his [or her] efforts will be seen;
And he [or she] will be repaid for it with fullest payment”.*

[The Qur'an - 53 : 39-41]

ii. "GOD - There is no deity save Him, the Ever-Living, the Self Subsistent Fount of All Being;
Neither slumber overtakes Him nor sleep;
His is all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth;
Who is there that could intercede with Him, unless it be by His leave?

He knows all that lies open before men and all that is hidden from them, whereas they cannot attain [or encompass] nothing of His knowledge save that which He wills [them to achieve];

His eternal power [His throne]over spreads the heavens and the earth, and their upholding wearies Him not. And He alone is truly Exalted, Tremendous."

[The Qur'an - 2 : 255]

These two restrictions points out that man can do, get or achieve only for that which he or she struggles hard. It is not possible to get anything in this world without an amount of labor and sacrifice for its attainment in this world. And he or she will get only what God wills for him or her to achieve. Man will get only what fits the overall strategy [Sunnah or the will] of God to run the affairs of this cosmos. This phenomenon explains that why millions have failed in their attempts, in spite of their best efforts, while million of others came out successfully, sometimes even with little effort. The entire history of human endeavors in the field of research and discovery, exploration and scientific probes should be examined in the light of these two Godly imposed restrictions

5.. HUMANS, BEING THE BEST OF CREATION, VERY OFTEN BEHAVES LIKE THE LOWEST :

*" By the fig and the olive;
By Mount Sinai;
And by this land [Makkah];
Surely We created the man of the best stature;
Then We reduced him to the lowest of the low"
Save those who believe and do good deeds.....*

[The Qur'an - 95 : 1-6]

With belief in his or her Creator and Sustainer, and following the Guidance which comes through His appointed messenger, man can balance his or her life on earth and can earn eternal bliss in the life Hereafter, failing which he/she becomes the lowest of the low. The tyrants of different ages represent this character.

As vicegerent of God on earth, with a free will and power to use each and everything that is there in the heavens and earth for the satisfaction of his or her urges, both men and women are free to explore and use the bounties of nature the way they like. But this status of man on earth is the position of extreme responsibility, being answerable to the Authority Whom he or she represents on earth. **Individual life span is the test period, the duration of which is not known to anyone except God.** During this period of stay on earth, he/she has to prove by his/her actions and deeds that they were worthy of the position entrusted to him/her. He/she is to make this life balanced and peaceful and work hard to earn the pleasure of his/her Creator in the life Hereafter.

Man's abode on earth is temporary and a kind of preparatory stage for the permanent abode in Heaven. This is really a challenge to the free will of man while living on earth. Are humans really free to do what they like, in the manner they are demonstrating around us or is their authority interwoven with the will of their Creator and Sustainer? Can he/she surrender his/her freewill to His will and make the worldly life balanced and peaceful? Can he/she make the earth a place worth living for the haves and have-nots in peace and harmony? These are the pertinent questions both for men and women to resolve before they pass on from this world to the world which is eternal and a place where only you can reap the harvest of your deeds which you performed in your brief span of life on earth.

CHAPTER - II

THE ACCOUNTABILITY

From the position of man on earth, it is crystal clear that this life is quite temporary. This world will come to an end one day. When? That is known only to the Creator and Sustainer. On that Day, every human being, from Adam to the last person on earth, will be resurrected and questioned about the trust and countless favors of Allah which he/she enjoyed on earth. The success or failure on that Day of Accountability will depend on his/her attitude towards the Guidance and how he/she treated it. It will be the most horrible Day and nothing will come to our help to save our skin from hellfire, save and except good deeds in obedience to the Creator and the mercy of the Sustainer. That will be the Day of either success or failure in the true sense of the term.

“ Those who disbelieve assert that they will not be raised again. Say unto them, [O Muhammad]: Ye, verily, by my Lord! You will be raised again and then you will be informed of what you did [on earth]; and that is easy for God. So believe in God and His messenger and the light which We have revealed [the Qur’an]. And God is well aware of what you do. [Think of] the time when He shall gather you all together unto the Day of Assembling,- that will be the Day of Loss and Gain! For, as for him who shall have believed in God and done what is just and right, He will on that Day efface his bad deeds, and will admit him into gardens through which running waters flow, therein to abide beyond the count of time: that will be a triumph supreme! But as for those who are bent on denying the truth and deny our revelations - they are destined for fire, therein to abide : and how vile a journey’s end!”

[The Qur’an - 64 : 7 -10]

Now let us go through some of the scenarios of the Day of Judgment, which have been depicted vividly in the Qur’an in many places. They are eye opening and must cause concern, in our heart and mind, for that inevitable Day. Here are a few:

“ Hence[bethink of yourself of the Last Hour], when the trumpet [of judgment] shall be sounded with a single blast, and the earth and the mountains shall be lifted up and crushed with a single stroke!

*Then on that day the Event will befall and the sky will split asunder, for that day it will be frail:
 And the angels [will appear] on the sides thereof and above them eight [angels] will bear aloft on that Day the Throne of thy Sustainer.
 On that Day you shall be brought to judgment: not [even] the most hidden of your deeds will remain hidden.
 Now as for him whose [life-long] record shall be placed in his right hand, he will exclaim, " Come you all! Read this my record! Behold I did know that [one day] I have to face my account!"
 And so he will find himself in a happy state of life, in a lofty paradise, with its fruits within easy reach.
 [And all who are thus blest will be told:] " Eat and drink with good cheer in return for all [the good deeds] that you have sent ahead in days gone by!"
 But as for him whose record shall be placed in his left hand, he will exclaim, " Oh, would that I had never been shown this my record, and neither known this my account! Oh, would that this [death of mine] had been the end of me! Of no avail to me is all that I have [ever] possessed, and all my power of argument has died away from me!"
 [Thereupon the command will go forth:] " Lay hold of him, and shackle him, and then let him enter hell, and thrust him into a chain of other sinners like him - a chain the length whereof is seventy cubits: for, behold, he did not believe in God, the Tremendous, and did not feel any urge to feed the needy: and so, no friend has he here today, nor any food save the filth which none but the sinners eat."*

[The Qur'an - 69: 13-37]

Please think about this episode for a moment. It is inevitable. None can avoid it. Keep yourself in the midst of this scenario and feel where you stand and in what category. Are you prepared for that Day? This is the life-long question.

" AND SO, when the great, overwhelming event [of resurrection] comes to pass - on that day man will [clearly] remember all that he has ever wrought; and the blazing fire [of hell] will be laid open before all [are destined] to see it. For, unto him who shall have transgressed the bounds of what is right, and preferred the life of this world [to the good of his soul], that blazing fire will truly be the goal! But unto him who shall have been stood in fear of his Sustainer's Presence, and held back his inner self from base desires, paradise will truly be the goal!"

[The Qur'an - 79 : 34 - 41]

Success on the Day of Judgment will grace only those who nurture the fear of God in their heart and pass the life on earth in a constant state of God-consciousness and keep their inner self free from of all kinds of greed, caprices and base feelings and acts. In short, those who control their human urges and keep them in a moderation, they may succeed on that Day.

On that Day, each man and woman will see by himself or herself all that each has been doing on this earth like passing events on a screen. Nobody will have the courage to deny the facts of his or her "life-film." The Qur'an presents this scenario marvelously in a small Chapter, AL-ZILZAL - The Earthquake.

*" When the earth is shaken with her [last] mighty shaking, and when the earth yields up her burden,
and man cries out, " What has happened to her ?"
on that day will she recount all her tidings, as thy Sustainer will have inspired her to do.
On that day will all men come forward, cut off from one another, To be shown their [past] deeds.
And so, he who shall have done an atom's weight of good, shall behold it; and he who shall have done an atom's weight of evil, shall behold it."*

[The Qur'an - 99 : 1 - 8]

When we are destined to see our deeds, whether good or bad, and in the heart of our heart we know what is good and what is bad, we can avoid gruesome repercussions of our actions and deeds by making a simple decision : to do only those acts which are to be seen as good on the Day of Judgment and totally discard those which are going to be harmful on that eventful Day. The free choice is ours. But what is good and what is bad is to be judged in the light of Guidance which comes from the Sustainer.

There is and will be no escape from accountability on the Day of Judgment. Every human being will be asked five fundamental questions about his or her life on earth.

***" The life how it was diluted [passed on]?
The time, life-span: how one passed it?***

*One's knowledge, how he /she used it?
Wordly possessions : from where he/she earned it [the source]?
And where it was used or consumed?*

This is from the Prophet's sayings and no body will be allowed to budge an inch from the mighty Court of God on the Day of Judgment, until he/she replies to these questions. Are we ready to meet that situation which is not at all avoidable. On that Day, the parts of our own body will become witness against us; the angels will present the total record of our activities on earth along with our intents and purposes, and God, who knows everything, what is known and what is hidden, will Himself be a witness against us. Just imagine the hopeless situation in which we will be surrounded from all sides. Only obedience to the Sustainer, the last Messenger and the last Book of Guidance will protect us from the wrought of our Creator and His hellfire.

The last thing which I would like to quote towards the Accountability is the true dialogue which will pass between God, the Sustainer and Prophet Jesus (PBUH) on the Day of Judgment:

*“AND LO! God said: O Jesus, ,son of Mary! Didst thou say unto mankind, ‘Worship me and my mother as deities beside God’?
[Jesus] answered : “Limitless art thou in Thy glory! It would not have been possible for me to say what I had no right to [say]! Had I said this, Thou wouldst indeed have known it! Thou knowest all that is within myself, whereas I know not what is in Thy Self. Verily, it is Thou alone who fully knowest all the things that are beyond the reach of the created being's perception. Nothing did I tell them beyond what thou didst bid me to [to say]: ‘Worship God,[Who is] my Sustainer as well as your Sustainer.’ And I bore witness to what they did as long as I dwelt in their midst; but since Thou tookest me, Thou alone wast their keeper over them: for Thou art witness unto everything. If Thou dost cause them to suffer - verily, they are Thy servants; and if Thou dost forgive them - verily, Thou alone art almighty, truly wise”.*

[The Qur'an - 5 : 116 - 118]

This is a true dialogue which reveals that similarly every Prophet of God will be questioned about his people, how they behaved towards him and his message. The accountability of Jesus, as presented here, is only a model to envision what will happen with each Prophet and his people on the Day of Judgment. Prophet Jesus will categorically express his ignorance of what people innovated after him. Like all the other Prophets

his message was simply to call the people to be obedient to their Sustainer. He categorically denies that he and his mother be worshipped as deities, besides God..

DENIAL OF LIFE AFTER DEATH :

From the above quotations in the Qur'an it is established that accountability is inevitable and every human being will encounter this situation after death. But still there are a lot of so-called "enlightened" brothers and sisters who do not believe in it and take this life as the only life. They are trying their best to maximize the pleasure of life on this earth as they take this earthly life as the only life. Why is it so? What makes them deny the life Hereafter? The Qur'an answers this paramount question very effectively, drawing our attention to bare facts of life.

“ And [the disbelievers] say, ‘ there is nothing beyond our life in this world, for we shall not be raised from the dead.’

If thou could but see [them] when they shall be made to stand before their Sustainer [and] He will say, ‘Is not this the truth’. They will answer, ‘Yea, indeed, by our Sustainer.’

[Whereupon] He will say: Taste, then, the sufferings that come from your having refused to acknowledge the truth [of this Day].”

[The Qur'an - 6 : 29 -30]

“ And We chose them [Humans], purposely above [all] creatures; And We gave them portents wherein was a clear trial; Now, behold, these [people] say indeed, ‘there is nothing but our first death, and we shall not be raised to life again; so, then, bring back our forefathers {as witness} if what you claim is true;

Are they better, or the folk of Tubba[a powerful people in South Arabia] and those before them? We destroyed them, for surely they were guilty.

For, [thus it is]: We have not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in mere idle play; We created them not save with truth [with a clear objective of accountability]; but most of them know not.”

[The Qur'an - 44 : 34 : 39]

How the disbelievers refuse the life after death has been described by God in the following Verse:

“ And they [disbelievers] say, ‘There is nothing beyond our life in this world. We die as we come to life, and nothing but times destroys us.’ But of this they have no knowledge whatever : they do nothing but guess.”

[The Qur’an - 45 : 24]

The disbelievers who denied this truth used to come and say to Muhammad:

“ When we are dead and have become dust [shall we be brought back life again]? A strange thing it is; such a return seems far-fetched indeed.”

[The Qur’an - 50: 3]

The other reason for disbelieving in the Day of Resurrection is the enchantment of the wordly life :

“ Lo! as for those who believe not in the Hereafter, we have made the works [deeds] fair [in their eyes], so they stumble blindly to and fro.”

[The Qur’an - 27 : 4]

The Day of resurrection is inevitable. None can stop or postpone it. It will come at its appointed hour:

“ And yet, the disbelievers who are bent upon denying the truth assert, “Never will the Last Hour come upon us!” Nay, By my Sustainer! By Him Who knows all that is beyond the reach of a created being’s perception: it [the Last Day] will most certainly come upon you.....”

[The Qur’an - 34 : 3]

God , time and again, has categorically declared in the Qur’an in different words and style that the Last Day of Judgment is to come. It was assertively declared by all the Prophets of God down to Prophet Muhammad that human beings are accountable on the Day of Resurrection when everyone will face the Sustainer. All the signs of creation, the good and evil effects of human actions and deeds on this earth, and the very concept of justice and fair play which each of us expect from the Creator and Sustainer, demand that there must be a Day when the Supreme Authority, the Knower of past, present and future, both hidden and open,

must do justice to each and every individual. Those who have done good and suffered for upholding His cause will be rewarded immensely. Equally, those who have denied His authority, His Guidance, His Messengers, behaved recklessly on this earth, filled it with disorder, oppression and bloodshed will be punished. His reward is eternal bliss, which is heaven and His punishment will be a life of torment in the Hell fire. Justice demands this as the final culminating point of human existence on earth.

This is the logical conclusion of man's status as vicegerent on earth. This position is of great importance and makes both men and women accountable to their Creator and Sustainer for their every action and deed on earth. It stems from the fact that they are the trustees of what they possess - life, time, talents and resources, not master as it is understood by many of us. As trustees, they are to use these resources the way the Supreme Master ordains them to do through Divine Guidance, the Qur'an, which is the last, final and the updated edition of the Code of Conduct revealed by God to Prophet Muhammad, who was the last Messenger of God on earth. This life span is a clear test from the Creator and Sustainer. Its success depends on our attitude towards the last Guidance, the Qur'an, and the life of Prophet Muhammad, who is guide and model for humanity till the final hour.

CHAPTER - III**THE CONCEPT OF SUCCESS AND LOSS**

The preceding Chapters determine the position of man on earth as vicegerent of God, with some dominating human urges and a free will to explore and utilize all and everything from the heavens to earth which God created and harnessed for man. The concept of accountability stems from this undeniable status of man on earth. Considering this unique position of man on earth, freedom with accountability before God, it is desirable to figure out who will be the successful and who will be the loser here and in the Hereafter.

First, let us see the criteria which the Creator and Sustainer has laid down in this respect. The Sustainer in Chapter # 103 of the Qur'an, containing only three small Verses, has spelled out the criteria of success and loss. To Him, every human being, irrespective of gender, race or position is a loser except those who believe in God, do good deeds, as ordained by Him, promote what is Truth and advise each other to sustain or forebear the eventualities in this pursuit.

“ Consider the flight of time [God swears by the time which is fleeting fast and bears the witness of everyone’s action and deeds on this earth] ! Verily, humankind is bound to lose himself [and herself] or humankind is in the state of loss, unless he [and she] be of those who attain to faith [in God] and do good deeds, and enjoin upon one another or exhort one another to truth or keeping to truth and exhort one another to endurance or enjoin one another to have patience in adversity.”

[The Qur’an - 103 : 1-3]

The criteria of success in this world is the attainment of power, fame, name, wealth or position. Men and women struggle for the whole of their life in achieving these material gains, but God has termed these things;

“ Let not the vicissitude [of the success] of those who disbelieve, deceive thee [O Muhammad]. It is but a brief comfort or enjoyment. And afterward, their habitation will be hell, an ill abode.”

[The Qur’an - 3 : 196, 197]

God swears by time that they all are losers who are competing to attain the temporary pleasures of this world. They kill themselves for objectives which are of no value on the day of Judgment. This entire world and what it contains will not carry any weight or will be worth anything in the life after death. These gains are temporary. They just come and go. Man has no control over them. These material things man will get when God wills and only to the extent what He wills. It is taken back or gets lost when His will is otherwise. Man is simply a hopeless spectator. Neither has he any control over his earnings or gains nor any control over holding them together.

The material gains remain with man only to the extent God wills. A slight calamity befalls him and everything is lost. A crack in the shares market makes thousands bankrupt within twinkling of an eye. Suddenly a fire breaks out [like brush fires in the West] and many beautiful villas are burnt to ashes. An earthquake destroys a total habitation within a spur of the moment. A devastating flood takes away all that man possesses, right before his/her eyes. Thus, there is no end to human frustrations when he/she struggles to maximize his or her personal pleasures or goes out of the way to make his/her fortune, especially when he/she commits crimes, deceives others, usurps others rights and deprives many more, just to meet his/her personal ends. At what a great loss man is!. The tragedy does not end here. What he/she makes, it does not go with him/her to the grave and beyond. Only he/she carries the good or the bad effects of his/her life-long fair or foul efforts, deeds and pursuits.

This scenario presents a hopeless picture of disdain when a man struggles for the whole of his life and earns nothing but the displeasure of his Creator and Sustainer. God swears that they are and will be the losers. The above quoted Verse starts with a categorical assertion from God that man [as species] is a loser, save and except those who earn the qualities as described thereto.

The concept of success and loss has also been put in the form of a capsule by God in a very small verse. Therein, God has categorically declared that the success is only for the believers. In other words, it belongs only to those who have Faith in Him.

“ Successful, indeed are those who are the believers [Mumineen].”

[The Qur'an - 23 : 1]

It must now be crystal clear that, with God, success is only for those who believe in Him, recognize His authority over each and every thing, work and behave on this earth as His true vicegerent, struggle for the whole of their life to establish His Kingdom on earth, endure and advise each other to forebear the onslaughts [of the evil and vested interests] with courage and determination which come in this process. These conditions of success need further elaboration so that it becomes clear how to obtain it in both the worlds.

There are certain important features of the concept of success and loss and that must be described in brief for clarification to the reader. It is to be noted that :

1. The above qualities of the believers are not confined to any race, nation or country;
2. These qualities can be attained by sincere faith, excellent moral qualities and observing the prescribed Code of Conduct in every aspect of life by any individual on earth;
3. The True success is not confined to transitory, worldly and material prosperity, but it comprises success in this life and in the life after death, [in the Hereafter], and is attained by sincere Faith and righteous deeds. This is a fundamental principle which cannot be denied either by the worldly "success" of the evil-doers or by the temporary "failure" of the righteous people.

At this stage, it is desirable that the misconception of "success," "welfare" and "prosperity" which the disbelievers have formed to delude themselves must be corrected. Here, it would be appropriate to quote from The Meaning of The Qur'an, Vol. VIII, page 25 and 26, by Moulana Maudoodi :

" According to the disbelievers, the one who enjoyed the good things of life and wielded power and influence in the society, had attained "success". On the other hand, the one who was deprived of these things was a "failure". This misconception has involved them in another misunderstanding.. They think that the one who has attained "success" is in the right and the beloved of God. Otherwise, how could he attain all the "success"? On the contrary, the one who is apparently deprived of these things is surely wrong in his [or her] deeds and is under the wrath of God [or gods]. As this misconception is one of the greatest deviations of

the materialists, the Qur'an has refuted it [in different ways and manner throughout the Qur'an].”

[Commentary by Maulana Maudoodi, Verses 55-56, Chapter 23 of the Qur'an]

The learned commentator further elucidates :

1. “ ‘Success’ is a far higher thing than the material prosperity and the transitory success of an individual, community or nation.
2. It is absolutely wrong to consider “prosperity” and “success” as a criterion of truth and falsehood.
3. It should be noted well that this world is a place of test and trial and not a place of reward and retribution. It is true that even in this world, sometimes there is some punishment or reward, but it is on a very limited scale, and even in this, there is an aspect of test. Therefore, it is an utter folly to consider material “success” and “prosperity” to be a proof that the recipient is right and so he is beloved of the Lord. Moreover, the tests and trials of individuals and communities are of many types and a seeker of the truth must understand at the very outset that the wordly “success” or “failure” of the people is not the result of ultimate reward and punishment and cannot be regarded as the criterion for the right or wrong creed, morals and actions and a sign of being the beloved of God or otherwise.
4. One must have a firm belief that truth and righteousness will ultimately gain victory over falsehood and wickedness. As regards the criterion of truth and falsehood and right and wrong, one must judge this in the light of Revelation and teachings of the Messengers, because common sense confirms the same, and it is also supported by the general conception which mankind has always had of good and evil.
5. As a corollary of the above, it would have become clear that according to the Qur'an [and this is confirmed by common sense], the concept of “reward” and “punishment” should also be different from the common one. For instance, if a wicked person or community is enjoying “prosperity,” it is not a reward of his evil deeds but a harder test for him, and it is not a blessing but the wrath of God. It seems that God has decided to punish the “prosperous people” with a severe scourge.
“ Then , when they forgot that whereof they had been reminded, We opened unto them the gates of all things till, even as they were rejoicing

in that they were given, We seized them unawares, and Lo! they were dumbfounded.”

[The Qur'an - 6 : 44]

On the other hand, if the righteous people are suffering from hardships and afflictions, it is not a punishment from God but a blessing in disguise to pass them through the “fire” of trial to remove impurity, if any, and turn them into pure gold. This trial is a blessing for the righteous people, while it is a test for the wicked people to give them a chance to improve or for a severe punishment for the persecution of the former.”

WHO WILL NOT GET SUCCESS :

So far, I have tried to discuss who is successful and what is its criteria. It is logical to pinpoint, in this respect, who are the people who will not be successful, in either of the two worlds. God, in His infinite mercy, has foretold the characteristics of those for whom the success will be denied.

“Behold ! Those who are bent upon denying the truth are spending their riches in order to turn others from the path of God [Righteousness]: they will go on spending them until they become [a source of] intense regret for them; and then they will be overcome! And those who [until their death] have denied the truth shall be gathered into hell, so that God may separate the bad from the good, and join the bad with one another, and link them all together [with His condemnation], and then place them in hell. They, are the losers [or the lost].”

[The Qur'an - 8 : 36-37]

The people who oppose the Messengers of God, negate the Way of life revealed through them and spend their wealth in obstructing the way to the Creator and Sustainer will meet this fate. In the present context of the world, those who oppose the Islamic Way of life and create stumbling blocks in its emergence as a Code of conduct for mankind to follow are destined to meet such a fate. They will encounter an extreme sense of sorrow, a lasting sense of failure and deprivation in this life, and will be the eternal losers in the next world. The vested interests of the age, the secular forces around the world and those who oppose the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth, are bound to meet this sorry state of their life. Those who oppose Islam, the last and final Way of life from their Creator and Sustainer, should evaluate their attitude towards the Divine Islamic System, which is only for the benefit and betterment of mankind.

Their opposition to its emergence anywhere on the surface of the earth in the socio-economic-political system of a country will definitely prove very costly to them. They are to die one day and face their Creator ultimately. On that Day, they all will repent but the repentance of that Day will be of no use.

“..... And they who are bent upon believing in what is false and vain, and thus are denying God - it is they, who shall be the losers.”

[The Qur'an - 29 : 52]

WHO WILL NOT GET FALAH - SUCCESS :

“.....The wrong-doers[the oppressors] will never get success.”

[The Qur'an - 12 : 23]

“Zalim” is a very comprehensive Qur’anic term for all kinds of oppression and wrong doers. It includes one who transgresses the laws and directives from God and crosses the limits imposed by Him in different walks of life, associates partners with Him, either in His person or in His attributes, claims to be the sovereign, irrespective of the fact, whether it is an individual or an organized body like Parliament, Congress or Senate, each and every one of them is a transgressor and, as such, an oppressor, or in the words of the Qur’an a “Zalim”, a tyrant. They are the people who have revolted against the authority of the Creator and Sustainer - living in His kingdom, enjoying each and every facility provided by Him; still, instead of being obedient to Him, transgress His authority by their free will and fill His earth with disorder, confusion and bloodshed. Such are the people who will never get the taste of True Success.

“...And God does not love the oppressors, [the wrong-doers or the the Zalim.”

[The Qur'an - 3 : 140]

“.....And God does not guide the oppressors, [the wrong -doers, or the Zalim]

[The Qur'an - 6 : 144]

Please look into the scenario on the Day of Judgment and think over the deplorable plight of the transgressors [the oppressors] which they are bound to encounter on that Day. There is no escape from it and none will

come to their help except their own good deeds and the mercy of God which will be there only for His most obedient servants and slaves.

THE ONLY RAY OF HOPE :

God is very kind and merciful to His creatures, especially to human beings. It is against His tradition to punish people without delivering guidance by His appointed Messengers or through their respective followers, giving them respite and warnings after warnings, so that they may turn to Him after repeated and constant reminders or get lost ultimately, if he or she does not pay any heed to these reminders. In addition to this arrangement, He has laid down a very comprehensive and concise program, in His Book of Guidance, the Qur'an, to attain success. If we practice it, start to live, act and behave accordingly in our life-time, there is every possibility that we may find success waiting for us on the Final Day. It is as follows:

“ O you who have attained the faith [entered into the fold of their Creator] ! Bow down and prostrate yourselves and worship your Sustainer [ALONE] and do good [to others], that haply you might attain success.”

[The Qur'an - 22 : 77]

In fact, the attainment of success or meeting with failure very much depends on man himself. God has endowed man with the power over goodness and badness in his nature. Both the power to go astray or be the best of human beings are there inherent in him or her. These powers were put in man when God created him. He is empowered to do good and be the best. Equally, he or she is fully empowered to go astray. Either of these positions man can achieve by exercising his or her free will. There lies the test of man on this earth. Whichever the way an individual decides to go, he has full freedom to proceed. The individual will be responsible for the efforts which he makes in either way. Success is for those who listen to and obey God. The directives of the Qur'an are very clear in this respect.

“ Consider the sun and its radiant brightness, and the moon as it reflects the sun!

*Consider the day as it reveals the world, and the night as it veils it darkly!
Consider the sky and its wondrous make, and the earth and all its
expanse!*

Consider the human self [human soul], and how it is [perfected] formed in accordance with what it is meant to be, and how it is [the human self] imbued with what is wrong for it and [what is] right for it.

He [or she] is indeed successful who causes his[or her] self to grow in purity [by obedience to God, His Prophet Muhammad and following the Way of life, the Qur'an];

And, he [or she] indeed, a failure who stunts it [goes against the inherent inclination towards goodness and revolts against the authority of God]. “

[The Qur'an - 91 : 1-10]

It is an open invitation to man, either to make genuine efforts to purify his/her soul and thereby achieve Success or spoil his or her life by ignoring the consciousness of God and be the loser in both the worlds. The choice is ours. The path to Success or Loss is wide open and every passing moment of life is a challenge to accept the path of righteousness or lose it in the hurry and bustle of this life and, thus, be lost for ever.

CHAPTER - IV**THE RISE AND FALL OF NATIONS**

Paul Kennedy, the world-known historian, writes in his book, “The Rise and Fall of Great Powers”, that so far 35 nations and civilizations have fallen and now lie buried in the pages of history. According to him, their decay and destruction was economic. These powers expanded themselves out of proportion to their economic resources and succumbed to it when they could not match the demand of their expansion with their decreasing tight means. They could not maintain a balance between the “means and ends” and, therefore, failed. He predicted the same kind of trouble for the USA which, in his estimation, is fast going down the hill.

Similarly, writers like Francis Fukuyama, at the downfall of the communism in Russia in 1991, declared that “history has come to an end and the future lies only for liberal democracy.” While Kennedy was partially correct in his estimation, Fukuyama was totally wrong. Both of them could not estimate moral decay as the paramount cause of annihilation of these fallen nations. Economic reasons may be supplementary or an additional cause of decay.

The Qur’an which emphatically deals with the destiny of human being’s Success and Loss, tells us categorically why nations and different civilizations were destroyed and rooted out from the surface of the earth. This statement needs some explanation so that its complexities and comprehensiveness become vividly clear to our readers.

TWO SETS OF LAWS :

God, after creating this universe and what it contains, is controlling it with two sets of laws. One, the Physical Laws, for the universe and the other, Moral Laws, for humans. God created everything in nature or in the physical world with a clear objective, on some well calculated principles or trajectory with immaculate routine. Each and every object in nature is following its inherent laws with mathematical accuracy since its very inception. And hence, there is no disorder or confusion anywhere in this cosmos. These are the Physical Laws which control and regulate nature. They are fixed and do not change at all. These physical laws can be termed as the destiny of the respective objects of nature. The Creator, the Sustainer and the Law Giver controls their destiny or their regularity, day

and night, constantly, since the time this universe came into existence, and He never gets tired of it.

“ His throne [Kingdom] includes the heaven and the earth and He is never weary of preserving them. He is Sublime, the Tremendous.”

[The Qur'an - 3 : 255]

These physical laws were made and are being preserved and maintained by the Creator Himself. He invites mankind, time and again, to think and find out the chemistry of each object of nature. The Qur'an confirms it in many places. I will just quote one example as a token:

*“ Will they [the people] not think over the camels, how they are created?
And at the sky, how it is raised aloft?
And at the mountains, how firmly they are set up?
And at the earth, how it is spread out?
And so [O prophet] remind them, for thy task is only to exhort them.”*

[The Qur'an - 88 : 17 -21]

It is an open invitation to scientists, discoverers, explorers and travelers to probe into each and every object of nature and find out its principle, its chemistry, its objective and how can it be put to use for the benefit of mankind for which it was created. As such, scientists do not invent anything, but through their hard labor and untiring pursuit discover those hidden laws which control the destiny of each. These physical laws are fixed and do not change. However, the tragedy lies there that humans deny the concept of God, the Creator and Sustainer, and called these Physical Laws as “ Mother Nature.” But, howsoever, they deny the Creator, they cannot escape the consequences of their negation. Whenever and whosoever disturbs and breaks these laws of nature, man and his abode - the earth, will suffer gravely.

Equally, there is another set of laws which are called Moral Laws. God had set them too, to regulate human relations, human society and the moral spectrum of human life where people are free to act, behave and live as per their free will as His vicegerent on earth. Here the man has been given a choice : either to follow his own whims, desires and caprices and fill this earth with disorder and bloodshed as we see around us today and down through the ages or to follow the Divine Guidance with fear of God and a paramount sense of accountability on the day of

Judgment. The choice will be his or hers and accordingly, he/she will be either punished or rewarded on that Day. These moral laws are as firm, fixed and unchangeable as the Physical Laws of this cosmos. Whosoever violates or breaks them, he or she cannot avoid its punishment.

For providing Moral Laws to human society, God appointed His messengers and through their good-offices sent down the Code of Conduct to humans in the form of Scriptures to guide them on how to live and behave on this earth. The Torah, the Bible and the Qur'an came one after the other, in terms of the commitment and the tradition of God as discussed earlier. Now the Qur'an is the last, final and updated edition of the Divine Guidance to conduct the affairs of man and human society till eternity. The Qur'an sets before us a comprehensive socio-religious-economic-political system for mankind to lead and live a balanced life in peace and harmony for all times to come. These are the Moral Laws which God had revealed to guide different aspects of human life. I will present them in a systematic order later on.

Before I discuss the Laws that control and regulate the nations' destiny, I would like to state that all power belongs to God. He is the Supreme and the Sovereign. He gives power to some to rule somewhere on the earth and takes away from someone else in accordance to His discretion. The rise and fall of peoples and individuals - nations, kingdoms, monarchies, cultures and civilizations, take place only under His Sovereign authority. He does what He likes but He does it under certain well defined principles prescribed by Him. Let us first see the contents of His discretion which is universal. How comprehensively the Qur'an describes it!

“ Say: O God ! Lord [owner] of all Sovereignty [dominions] ! Thou givest sovereignty [power] unto whom Thou willest and takest away the power [dominion] from whom Thou willest; and Thou exaltest whom Thou willest and abasest whom Thou willest. In Thy hand is all good. Verily, Thou hast the power to will anything.”

“Thou makest the night grow longer by shortening the day, and Thou makest the day grow longer by shortening the night. And Thou bringst forth the living out of that which is dead, And Thou bringst forth the dead out of that which is alive. And Thou grantest sustenance unto whom Thou willest, beyond all reckoning”.

[The Qur'an - 3 : 26-27]

There is another important undertaking by God which categorically declares that the power on earth is meant only for His obedient, dutiful and loyal slaves [Abd], if they are available on earth.

“ And , indeed, after exhorting [man], We laid it down in all the books of Divine Scriptures that My righteous slaves will inherit the earth.”

[The Qur'an - 21 : 105]

But, if such a group of Righteous Slaves is not found anywhere on the surface of the earth, then, in the words of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), he advised his people against the atrocities of Pharaoh that power belongs to God; He gives it to whom He desires [in His discretion].

“ And Moses said unto his people, “ Turn unto God for help, and have patience in adversity. Verily, all the earth belongs to God: He gives it as heritage to such as He wills of His servants: and the future belongs to God-conscious [people who keep their duty unto Him].”

[The Qur'an - 7 : 128]

If such a group of righteous people are not there, then the power is entrusted to those people who excel in human character and possess better human qualities to run and manage the affairs of this world. I would like to quote a passage from a booklet of S.S.A. Maudoodi, Nation's: Rise and Fall - Why?

“ As Master it is His desire that His world should be managed in right order; that the world should be made a fairer place; that the resources, the powers, and the capabilities endowed by Him should be utilized in the best possible way. He most certainly does not like - nor can He be expected to like- that His world should be destroyed, devastated or spoiled with disorder, foul-play, tyranny or oppression. In the sight of God only those candidates for management of the affairs of the world are approved for selection who possess constructive abilities of an extraordinary degree. He entrusts to them the authority [power] to manage the affairs of the world.”

This explains how the affairs of the world are managed when God's most trusted people, His Righteous Slaves, are not available on this earth. But those who are entrusted to manage the affairs have to play the game very fairly, otherwise, they are de-throned soon and some other group who are

better qualified at that time are brought to power to maintain an order in this world. This change continues till the slaves of God come forward to fill the world with justice and fair-play. See how clear the dictates of God are in this respect.

GOD DISLIKES TRANSGRESSION :

“ So they routed them [the forces of Goliath] by God’s leave. And David slew Goliath : And God bestowed upon him the kingdom and wisdom, and imparted to him the knowledge of whatever He willed. And if God had not repelled some men by others, corruption would have surely overwhelmed the earth: but God is limitless in His bounty to all [His] creations.”

[The Qur’an - 2 : 251]

“ Those who have been driven from their homelands against all rights for no other reason than their saying, ‘ Our Sustainer is God’ For, had it not been for God’s repelling some men by means of others, [all] monasteries and churches and synagogues and mosques - in [all of] where God’s name is abundantly extolled - would surely have been destroyed [ere now].”

[The Qur’an - 22 : 40]

Such atrocities, due to religious differences, perpetuate even today as in Ireland, Bosnia, Palestine, India and elsewhere in Europe, Asia and Africa. Those nations, people or civilizations who transgress the authority of God, violate the Moral Principles and become tyrants are removed from power. Their kingdom falls and they become the part of history.

GOD STANDS FOR JUSTICE AND FAIR-PLAY :

God wants Justice to prevail in this world. If any system or people hinder justice from prevailing, it loses its right to exist on His earth.

“ God Himself is witness that there is no God save Him and His angles and the men of learning [too are witnesses], maintaining His creation in justice, there is no God save Him, the Almighty, the Wise.”

[The Qur’an - 3 : 18]

And in order to establish justice in human society, God approved Islam as the Code of Conduct or as the only Way of life for mankind.

“ Lo! Religion [Deen - Way of life] with God is Islam - to surrender to His will and Guidance.....”

[The Qur'an - 3 : 19]

The very objective for which God approved Islam as a way of life for humans and appointed His messengers to this world was to establish justice in the human society.

“ We, verily, sent our messengers with clear proofs and revealed with them the Scripture and the balance [scale], that mankind may observe right measure [justice].”

[The Qur'an - 57 : 25]

The task to establish justice [Al-Qist] was assigned by God to His believers, the Muslims [who are obedient to God]. It is the prime obligation of every Muslim on this earth to struggle for the establishment of His Kingdom on earth so that justice becomes the order of the day in human society.

“ Those who if We give them power in the land, [they] establish Salah [prayers], pay the Zakah [poor man's share], and enjoin kindness [Ma'roof] and forbid inequity [Munkar] and with God rests the end [decision] of [all] affairs. “

[The Qur'an - 22 : 41]

Removing the evils [Munkar] from the society and enjoining good [Ma'roof] is nothing but to establish the order of justice in this world. Prophets David and Solomon established the Kingdom of God on earth in terms of the Torah, the Book of Guidance of that time and established the order of justice and fair play accordingly. Then, Prophet Muhammad and his beloved companions established the Kingdom of God on earth in their life-time, in terms of the Qur'an - the Book of Guidance for all times to come, and filled the earth with justice and orderliness. People of different nations were freed from the slavery of their own species, individual liberty and freedom were delivered, and mankind regained its lost prestige and position. Now, human history will repeat, when any people of the

world will enter in the fold of their Creator, follow Prophet Muhammad as their guide and model, and lead a life according to the last and final Guidance, the Qur'an in its totality. That will be the group of the righteous people and, then, God will fulfill His commitment as stated earlier.

This opportunity is now open to all the people of the world. The world stage is vacant. Whosoever comes forward, irrespective of whether they are Christians, Jews or Muslims; white, black or yellow; belongs to developed or underdeveloped countries; the leadership of the world will be entrusted to him [them] with all the blessings and favors from God, if they prove that they are obedient to their Creator and Sustainer and lead a life of accountability in this world. The world, as it stands today, is full of oppression, tyranny and injustices. This situation warrants a change in world leadership. All man-made laws and "isms" have failed to deliver good to mankind. Liberal democracy also could not do better than the past man-made systems. It is out to establish the hegemony of one power or one nation or one system of life which is totally secular and based on denial of the authority of God. It could not deliver justice, neither to its own people nor to the suffering humanity at large. The stage is, therefore, well-set for the Righteous Servants of God to come forward and deliver justice, peace, harmony and a balanced system of life to mankind.

GOD'S TRADITION TOWARDS CHANGE :

God gives some respite to those who deny His authority so that they should come back to Him. When they do not pay any heed to His reminders, and go on increasing their negative attitude, God, then, increases His favors and the rebellious men surmount in their disobedience. Then, suddenly, they are caught. Calamity falls on them either from the sky or from the earth or from other human beings, and that people are destroyed for their own follies and mistakes of disobedience to their Creator and Sustainer.

" We have sent [already] unto peoples that were before thee [O Muhammad] and We visited them with tribulation and adversity, in order that they might grow humble."

"If only when our disaster came on them, they had been humble! But their hearts were hardened and the Devil made all that they used to do seem fair unto them!"

" Then when they forgot that whereof they have been reminded, We opened unto them the gates of all things till, as they were rejoicing in that

*which they were given, We seized them unawares and Lo! they were **dumbfounded**".*

[The Qur'an 6 : 42 - 44]

This is a very eye-opening illustration for the people of Europe, America and some of the Muslim countries to think the manner in which they are enjoying today their high standard of living and worldly gains, inspite of their denying the Divine Guidance for all practical purposes. In fact, they are inviting the wrath of their Creator and Sustainer, which will be sudden and catastrophic.

Elsewhere in the Qur'an, God gives an example for better understanding of His tradition as and when the nations are destroyed.

" God coineth a similitude : A township that dwelt secure and well content, its provision coming to it in abundance from every side but it disbelieved in God's favors, so God made it experience the garb of dearth and FEAR because of what they used to do [bad deeds in disobedience to God]."

[The Qur'an - 16 : 112]

SUMMATION :

From the above discussion, the readers can well understand the Guiding principles of the Rise and Fall of powers on this earth vis-à-vis the tradition which God has maintained throughout human history in respect of the change of leadership in human society. Now before concluding this Chapter, it would be better if the underlying basic principles are summarized for the understanding of our readers. It will present a bird's eye view before them.

* This world belongs to God, the Creator and Sustainer. He gives the kingdom on earth to whom He likes in His discretion which is based on some well-defined principles;

* Primarily, this world is to be inherited by His Righteous Slaves, the true Muslims - who are obedient to God;

* If the Righteous People are not there, then, the leadership of the world is given to those who are better equipped to manage the affairs of the

world. But when they multiply the transgression and oppression on earth, they are de-throned and are replaced by some other people who are better equipped and could manage the world affairs in a better way;

* Transgression and oppression are committed by those who deny the authority of God, lead a life of irresponsibility on earth, disregard the Divine Guidance and try to lead a life on their own accord, totally neglecting the life-pattern of the Prophet of the time. The life-pattern of Prophet Muhammad is the guide and model for our age and for the ages to come;

* When the people transgress and fill the earth with oppression and injustices, they are given respite, reminders after reminders, from God to return to His fold. But when they don't pay any heed to it, they are suddenly caught, in the midst of their merry-making. They gradually lose the power, fame and name and become a fused force or very ineffective on the surface of the earth.

In other words, those people or nations who ignore the Moral Laws of this world, as prescribed by God through Divine Guidance, fill the earth with disorder, and bloodshed. When they, inspite of reminders, multiply their transgressions and injustices manifold, they are suddenly caught by God and destroyed or annihilated and left on the surface of the earth as ineffective and exhausted nations, having no say in the affairs of the world. The leadership of the world is then transferred to some other people in terms of the tradition mentioned earlier. It is through this process, more than 35 nations of the world are now lying on the death bed of history and many more are following the same footsteps to meet the same fate sooner or later. This is the tradition of God. Whosoever breaks or violates the Moral Laws, will meet the same fate.

Both Paul Kennedy and Francis Fukuyama did not have the vision of the effective and the ever-present binding Moral Laws, controlling the destiny of the nations and civilizations of the world. Communism encountered this fate and collapsed as it was simply a symbol of oppression, tyranny and injustices throughout its existence. It lived only 72 years and then lost its leadership role. Now Russia has become an ineffective and fused force of the world, inspite of holding thousands of nuclear weapons in its armory. It violated the prescribed Moral Laws and, therefore, as per tradition of God, had to suffer the consequences.

It is an open warning to the USA too. It must give up its double standards, both at home and abroad, be fair to all the nations on this globe, whether

big or small, and withdraw its support from the oppressive regimes around the world, failing which the writings on the wall of time are very clear. The wrath of the Creator and Sustainer is watching all our actions and deeds day and night. Warnings after warnings are pouring in one way or the other, but we, perhaps, have become totally callous. God forbid, we do not become the target of God's punishment, which, as per His tradition, can come from any side, at any time and so suddenly that we will, then, remain only as **“dumbfounded”**.

With the above explanation and application of the Moral Laws on the two current situations before us, the concept of the Rise and Fall of nations must have become crystal clear. Whosoever maintains these laws will harvest the pleasure of God and will be the leaders of mankind till the time they remain **“the salt of the land and the lamp of the hill.”** That is why both the Rise and the Fall of nations take decades and sometimes centuries together. History bears proof to this fact.

Let us study the system of life which the Qur'an provides as a Moral Code of Conduct for individuals and people to follow and administer justice and fair play to each and every citizen who lives within its jurisdiction and help in establishing a just and balanced society. In the following pages, I will try to lay down these guiding principles as prescribed in the Book of Wisdom, the Qur'an, and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad under various sets of headings. The traditions of Prophet Muhammad are supplementary and complementary to the Qur'an. God had not only sent the Guidance but also, simultaneously, appointed prophets to serve as guides and models for their people. The position of Prophet Muhammad is, thus, extremely important and that has been stated in the Qur'an vividly by God Himself. I will first illustrate his position and then describe the set of Moral Laws in different groups in subsequent chapters:

1. The position of Muhammad, the last Messenger of God;
2. The Family system;
3. The status of women;
4. Principles of Social Justice;
5. Islam, the only choice.

CHAPTER - V**THE POSITION OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PBUH)**

The position of prophets is very important in respect to receiving guidance from God. It is the tradition of God to send the guidance, as discussed earlier, through His appointed messengers. God had sent messengers to all the people of this earth. God never destroys a people without first sending His prophet as a warner. The people are destroyed only when they reject the prophet of the time and his message. The prophets deliver the message in the form of Scripture, explain the complexities of the message with wisdom, purify the character of his followers, and present his life as the most perfect model of his teachings. These were the functions and responsibilities of the prophets of their respective times.

“ Indeed, God bestowed a favor upon the believers when He raised up in their midst an apostle from among themselves, to convey His messages unto them, and to cause them to grow in purity, and to impart unto them the Divine writ as well as wisdom - whereas before that they were indeed, most obviously, lost in error.”

[The Qur'an - 3 : 164]

Along with these functions or assignments, the prophets of God tried to build a society and a state according to the divine guidance in order to fill the earth with justice and fair-play. Prophet David and Solomon did it in their life-time with the existing Torah and Prophet Muhammad did it in his life-time as ordained by God in the Qur'an.

THE UNIQUE POSITION OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD :

Since, Prophet Muhammad is the last prophet of God, and no prophet is to come after him, God preserved the Qur'an and its teachings intact for all times to come. As such, the life of Prophet Muhammad is also available in its minutest detail for mankind to follow till eternity. Prophet Muhammad's life is the practical model of the Qur'an and its teachings. He said and did only what God ordained or commanded him to do. God, therefore, has made his position crystal clear in the Qur'an in His own

words, so that no doubt remains in anybody's mind about his traditions and the life-pattern which he demonstrated for the guidance of mankind.

“ And neither does he speak out of his own desire; that [which he conveys to you] is but [a divine] inspiration with which he is being inspired.”

[The Qur'an - 53 : 3-4]

The Code of Conduct which Islam advocates consists of the Qur'an and the traditions of the Messenger of God, Muhammad. With the aforesaid in the background, his position must be studied in detail as envisaged by God Himself in the Qur'an. God has, therefore, made it essential for a believer that he or she must obey and follow Prophet Muhammad along with obedience to God. His or her belief in God will never be perfect, reliable and trust-worthy, if he or she does not obey, follow and love Muhammad more than any other human beings in this world, including his or her own self and parents. Nurturing any doubt about his authority or his unique position will destroy one's belief in its totality. The following Verses from the Qur'an amply clarify his position. God declares:

“ Verily, in the messenger of God ye have a good example for him who looketh unto God and the Last day, and remembereth God much.”

[The Qur'an - 33 :21]

“ Say [O Muhammad, to mankind] : If ye love Allah, follow me [Muhammad]; Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”

“ Say: Obey Allah and the Messenger, But if they turn away. Lo! Allah loves not the disbelievers.”

[The Qur'an - 3 : 31 - 32]

“And We have sent thee [O Muhammad] as an apostle unto all mankind : and none can bear witness [thereto] as God does. Whoever obeys the messenger, obeys Allah [God]. Thereby and as for those who turn away [from obeying you, O Muhammad] ; We have not sent thee as a warder over them .“

[The Qur'an - 4 : 79 - 80]

In the above quoted Verses, God has categorically asserted that one who is obedient to Prophet Muhammad and follows his life-pattern, in fact obeys and follows Allah [God]. That is why obedience to Allah without obedience to Prophet Muhammad becomes meaningless.

Elsewhere, in Chapter 59 Verse 7, God directs Muslims that whatsoever Prophet Muhammad gives you or ordains you to do, take it and do it, and whatever he commands you not to do, give it up. This established his total authority on earth after God :

“.....And whatsoever the messenger gives you, take it. And whatsoever he forbids, abstain [from it] and keep your duty to Allah. Lo! Allah is stern in reprisal.”

[The Qur'an - 59 : 7]

“ But nay, by Thy Sustainer! They do not [really] believe unless they make thee [O Prophet] a judge of all on which they disagree among themselves, and they find in their hearts no bar to an acceptance of thy decision and give themselves up [to it] in utter self-surrender.”

[The Qur'an - 4 : 65]

This unique position of Prophet Muhammad is full of reverence. A slightest disrespect to him, to his authority, or to his position will put the faith of a believer in danger, which may even be lost within a moment.

“ O you who have attained to faith! Do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet, neither speak loudly to him, as you speak loudly to one another, lest all your [good] deeds come to naught while ye perceive not.”

[The Qur'an - 49 : 2]

This was the directive to the believers when Prophet Muhammad was alive and when he passed away, all his traditions, sayings, actions and deeds are equally full of reverence and are to be followed with total respect and adoration.

HIS UNIVERSALITY:

Unlike the rest of the Prophets who were appointed to their respective people, only Prophet Muhammad was appointed as Messenger of God for the entire human race. His prophethood was not restricted to the people of Arabian Peninsula. His addressees were for the entire mankind. That is why, at the very first opportunity which he got after the Treaty of Hudaibiyah with Quraish of Makkah in 6th Hijra [corresponding to 627CA], he wrote letters to all the kings, monarchs and despotic rulers, including the two superpowers of the time - Persian and the Roman Empire, and invited them to come into the fold of their God, the Creator and Sustainer. Some of them accepted his invitation, some opposed, and some others showed respect to his call. This general invitation subsequently brought the entire region of Middle East and North Africa into the fold of Islam ultimately within a few decades. This universal position of his prophethood has clearly been stated in the Qur'an.

“ Say [O Muhammad] : O Mankind! Verily, I am an apostle of God to all of you, [sent by Him] unto whom the dominion over the earth and heavens belongs! There is no deity save Him; He alone grants life and deals death.” So believe, then, in God and His messenger - the unlettered Prophet who believes in God and His words- and follow him, so that you might find guidance!”

[The Qur'an - 7 : 158]

“ And We have not send thee [O Muhammad] otherwise than to mankind at large, to be a herald of glad tidings and a warner; but most people do not understand [this].“

[The Qur'an - 34 : 28]

“ Whatever of good befalls thee It is from God, and whatever of ill befalls thee it is from thyself, We have send thee [O Muhammad] as a messenger unto mankind and God is sufficient as witness”.

[The Qur'an - 4 : 79]

A BLEESING FOR MANKIND:

The life-pattern of Prophet Muhammad is a model for the entire mankind in every walk of life. He delivered human beings from the slavery of their

own species to the obedience of God and, thus, brought all humans at an equal footing with no race, color or status discrimination. He developed a society where there was no distinction of any kind. Only the men and women who excelled in God-consciousness [Taqwah] could distinguish themselves in that society. He raised the position of women from slavery and servitude to be distinguished members of the society with equal rights as human beings. He made the government as the servant of the people. No one was above the law, including himself. He fought and established not only the rights of women but rights of all the oppressed and downtrodden people of the society. He was a man of words, trust and service to all and sundry. He was extremely generous and mindful of the rights of the poor, needy, orphans, widows, travelers, children and even of animals. There is no end to his blessings for human society. He was just, kind and merciful to all who came into contact with him. Thus, he and his life-pattern are an immense blessing for the people of his time, and a model for the entire human race till eternity.

If you study any chapter or any aspect of his life, whether as a husband, father, teacher, reformer, statesman, leader, guide, head of state, judge, businessman, neighbor, guardian, friend, general or administrator, you will find in him a perfect model in every walk of life. You will find every phase of his life as human, lovable and charismatic. It will move your heart and mind. You will feel inspired and will love to follow it throughout your life. It will present before you a complete model which even his enemies could not deny. They used to call him the “Truthful” and the “Trustworthy.” In short, he was and is a blessing and a boon for the entire mankind to follow as a model and guide for today and for all times to come. God Himself had pronounced him to be a blessing to mankind.

“ We sent thee [O Muhammad] as a mercy towards all the worlds [peoples].”

[The Qur’an - 21 : 107]

God Himself confirms how soft hearted Prophet Muhammad was towards his people!

“ It was by the mercy of God that thou were lenient [kind and merciful] to them [O Muhammad], for if thou hadst been stern and fierce of heart they would have been dispersed from round about thee....”

[The Qur’an - 3 : 159]

“ For, behold, thou [O Muhammad] keepest indeed to a sublime way of life [most accomplished behavior and character].”

[The Qur'an - 68 : 4]

From the above presentation, one can well understand the important part which the life of Prophet Muhammad plays in building and reforming the human character and the role model which it presents in inspiring all who believe in him and follow his life-pattern. That brings forth the importance of belief in Prophet Muhammad as an integral part of faith, or a Muslim's creed when one enters into the fold of Islam by reciting the Kalimah [the words] : **“La Ilaha Illallah, Muhammadun Rasulullah”** - *[There is no deity except Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah].* He, in fact, is the practical model of what a Muslim believes and practices the whole of his or her life. This is a unique and a very especial position which only Prophet Muhammad holds in the community of the prophets of God as he is the guide and role model for all times to come.

Before I conclude this Chapter, I would like to add that the readers should know that by the end of the sixth century of the Christian Era, humanity had lost all the Divine Guidance which came from God. It was due to human innovations, distortions and interpolations in the Divine Guidance. All the original Scriptures which were sent before the Qur'an were, thus, lost. In the name of guidance, only some gospels were available, and they could not meet the growing needs of human society. There were no human rights anywhere on the surface of the earth. They were reserved only for the ruling class. The rest were treated just like serfs. The position of women was of servitude. Paganism and idolatry were prevalent everywhere in different forms and shapes. Tyranny, oppression, bloodshed, exploitation and discrimination of an extreme type were the integral part of the order of the day. This situation was, thus, quite ripe for the arrival of a Messenger for the Salvation and the deliverance of mankind. This was the appropriate time for God, as per His commitment, to send or appoint a messenger, as all the previously-sent guidance stood lost, and mankind desperately needed an updated and comprehensive Divine Guidance from the Creator and Sustainer to lead a balanced life in peace and harmony.

At that time, the few God-conscious people of Judeo-Christian societies who had the knowledge and understanding of the original Scripture and its prophecies, were in waiting, especially at the Northern outskirts of the Arabian Peninsula, in monasteries for the arrival of the Savior of

mankind. That Savior was nobody else but Prophet Muhammad whose prophecies to come at the appointed hours were and still abound both in the Old and the New Testaments. See, the way God foretold the signs of the arrival of the Savior in old Scriptures and think how He pinpoints this state of human mind in the Qur'an. Equally, please note the opposition which the Peoples of the Scriptures made against the Messenger, the Savior of mankind, and his message on arrival. This is called blindness or obstinacy of a great magnitude. They waited for his arrival for centuries together, but when he appeared at the place from where they were expecting him to rise at the threshold of seventh century AD, they opposed him tooth and nail and that opposition is still going on unabated. This is the greatest tragedy of the human race.

“ Indeed, there has come unto you [O mankind, after a prolonged waiting] a Messenger from among yourselves : heavily weighs upon him [the thought] that you might suffer [in the life to come]; full of concern for you [is he, and] full of compassion and mercy towards the believers.

But if those who are bent upon denying the truth, turn away [O Muhammad] say : God is sufficient for me! There is no deity save Him. In Him I have placed my trust, for He is the Sustainer , and the Lord of the Tremendous Throne.”

[The Qur'an - 9 : 128 -129]

CHAPTER - VI

THE FAMILY SYSTEM

In Islam, after obedience to God and His Prophet, the next in line is obedience to parents, who constitute the base line of the family system. If the children are loyal and faithful to their parents and the parents, do take good care of their children, the family will be founded on solid grounds. Family will, then, become a well-knit organization. It will have a good discipline. It will grow into a cradle of love, a fountain of affection with care and concern for each member. It will help in growing and maintaining healthy traditions and will become the center of gravity for all its members. Wherever they may be, they will feel always attached to their parents and family. If the family structure is well founded and parents are the center of gravity, the entire social structure of a nation will help in producing healthy children and well behaved generations. Thus, love for and obedience to parents are the cementing factors to develop ideal families and thereby, an ideal society. Only such families can produce generations of people who fight for the cause of righteousness and for the rights both of the Creator and human beings.

The Creator and Sustainer is well aware of the true objective of an ideal family, which depends on obedience to God, His Prophet and parents. That is why God had laid extraordinary emphasis on obedience to parents. Obedience to parents stems from the commands of God. It is God who has laid a great emphasis on the obedience to parents; rather, He has put obedience to parents right after obedience to Himself. He has minutely laid down His directives very clearly and vividly.

“ And thy Sustainer has ordained that you shall worship none but Him. And do good unto [thy] parents. Should one of them, or both attain to old age in thy care, never say “ Ugh” to them or scold them, but [always] speak unto them with reverent speech, and spread over them humbly the wings of thy tenderness, and say: “O My Sustainer! Bestow Thy grace upon them, even as they cherished and reared me when I was a child!”

[The Qur'an - 17 “ 23 -24]

“ Now [among the best of the deeds which] We have enjoined upon man is goodness towards his parents. In pains did his mother bears him, and in pain did she give him birth; and her bearing him and his utter

dependence on her took thirty months. And so when he attains full maturity and reaches forty years he [righteously] prays: O my Sustainer ! Inspire me so that I may forever be grateful for those blessings of Thine with which Thou has graced me and my parents, and that I may do what is right [in a manner] that will meet Thy goodly acceptance; and grant me righteousness in my offspring [as well]. Verily, unto Thee have I turned in repentance: for, verily, I am of those who have surrendered themselves unto Thee!"

[The Qur'an - 46 : 15]

" And [God says:] ' We have enjoined upon man goodness towards his parents: his mother bore him by bearing strain upon strain, and his utter dependence on her lasted two years: [hence O man,] be grateful towards Me and towards thy parents,[and remember that] with Me is all journey's end.

"[Revere thy parents:] yet should they endeavor to make thee ascribe divinity, side by side with Me, to something thy mind cannot accept [as divine], obey them not; but [even then] bear them company in this worldly life with kindness, and follow the path of those who turned towards Me. In the end , unto Me you all must return; and thereupon I shall make you [truly] understand all what you were doing [in life]."

[The Qur'an - 31 : 14-15]

The above quotations from the Qur'an give emphasis on the following points.

1. Obedience to God is of paramount importance. It has, therefore, precedence over everything.
2. Obedience to parents is a must. If someone violates it, he or she commits a grave sin.
3. Considering the pains and strain which a mother sustains in bearing, rearing and caring for her children, her position is superior in degree and Prophet Muhammad, in one of his traditions, ordains: **"Paradise lies under the feet of the mother."** So important and respectful she is.
4. If the same parents go against the directives of God, the children are asked not to obey them. This directive is explicitly clear. Children have

been directed to refute their parents in such a case. But in no way can the children ignore their parents human and worldly rights. They deserve decent behavior, proper care and treatment. The human rights of parents are paramount, even if they don't believe in God and refuse His authority and Guidance from Him. Islam gives this unique position to parents, which thereby fosters a sound and cohesive family system.

5. Just think of the stable and contented environment of a family where both parents and children are Muslims and obedient to God. There, the children are always found eager to serve their parents in the best possible way and the parents are always full of love, prayers and affection for their children. When such blessed families constitute a society, that society will be a boon for the entire mankind.

PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES :

Parents, while enjoying such a unique position that Islam provides for them, have been given a special responsibility towards their children. They are to protect them from the Hellfire, by keeping them on the path of righteousness, giving them proper knowledge, understanding and training under the Divine Guidance, and fostering in their character and behavior love, caring and benevolence as human beings.

“ O you who have attained to faith! Ward off from yourselves and those who are close to you [your families] that fire [of the Hereafter] whose fuel is human beings and stones, over which are set angels strong, severe, who resist not God in that which He commands them, but do that which they are commanded.”

[The Qur'an - 66 : 6]

This is the right of children over their parents, that they should be treated at home with love, care and respect, receive good upbringing and proper education, practice set moral rules and ethical standards as prescribed by God and His Prophet and be helped by their parents to develop a God-conscious attitude in life which will keep them away from what leads to the Hellfire. Equally, there is a stern warning that the love for children should not be blind. Parents are to be careful that their love for their children does not lead them to some wrong-doings which may be quite devastating for themselves as well as for their children. God's warning is

very clear. It exhorts one to maintain a balance between love and concern for the next life. In fact, it is the love of children and spouses that leads men to go out of bounds and do wrong things for their comforts and luxuries. Thus, they doom themselves. God warns parents in this respect.

“ O you who believe! Behold, some of your spouses and children are enemies unto you [when the people do wrong for them or they become impertinent] : so beware of them! But if you pardon [their faults], and forbear, and forgive, then, behold, God will be much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace.”

“Your worldly goods and your children are but a trial and a temptation. Whereas with God there is a tremendous reward”.

[The Qur’an - 64 : 14 -15]

The above quotations from the Qur’an clearly establish a well-balanced family system wherein parents are to be respected and taken care of, beyond the imagination of a secular society, and children are blessed with an excellent Islamic environment for their versatile growth. I would like to end this Chapter with a saying of Prophet Muhammad, quoted in the book of Ibn - Majah :

“ A person came to the Messenger of God and inquired from him : what is the right of parents on their children. Prophet replied, “They are your heaven and hellfire.”

It means, if you fulfill their rights and meet your obligations towards your parents, you will go to paradise, but if you fail, you will go to hellfire. What a marvelous emphasis, is given by Islam towards the rights of parents. In other words, it is this basic education that establishes the family system in an Islamic society on solid grounds, a boon for parents, especially when they approach old age. What a tremendous blessing Islam would have been for those parents who are unnecessarily spending or likely to spend their final days in elderly or nursing homes, away from their children who should be caring for them.

This situation demands some moments from each of us to think as potential or real fathers and mothers about the benedictions which the family system, as described above, would have showered upon us, had we been serious enough to consider Islam as an alternative to the system of life we are practicing today. What an unspeakable exquisite blessings of God we all are missing! The alternative has been spelled out throughout these pages.

CHAPTER - VII**STATUS OF WOMEN IN ISLAM****HER CONDITION BEFORE ISLAM :**

Before the advent of Islam, the position of women was very miserable. They had no status of their own. They were sold in the slave market like some commodity. They could not inherit any property. In most of the societies the Law of Progenitor was in effect through which only the oldest son was to inherit the family wealth after the demise of the father. In the Christian religious circle she was the original “sinner,” and was treated as untouchable during her menses according to Judaism. Practically, she had no status socially, economically or politically. She was even deprived of her status as a human being.

In a country like India, she was to die with her dead husband, to be put on fire alive with his dead body. That ceremony which is called “Sati,” is still in practice in some parts of India. She has no respect or life as a widow, after the death of her husband. There was no concept of second marriage, neither in early Christianity nor in Hinduism. In the Arabian society too, she was treated as a second class citizen. There, the son who could inherit the property of his deceased father was also to inherit the wives of the deceased father, i.e., his own mother or mothers. They were kept in temples, sometimes in the thousands, as nuns and “service girls” for the male hermits and temple men.

Under both Greek and Roman civilizations, women commanded respect in the beginning but subsequently, with the rise in power, the position of women was degraded. In the dark ages of Europe, she was the symbol of sins. She was not permitted to remarry even after proper and agreed upon separation from her husband. Her life was extremely miserable by any canon of justice. Unfortunately, the liberal societies of the West have carried the condition of women to another extreme where she has become the object of lust for sex, openly and everywhere. This is the degradation of women to another extreme. She is being fooled in the name of equality, freedom, emancipation and liberalism. The fate of women has, thus, been swinging like a pendulum from one extreme to another. She is deprived of her God-gifted position today as she was in the past, till the time Islam restored her status, dignity, honor, respect and made her the queen of her home, the comfort for her husband and the center of love, gravity and

cohesiveness for her children. The institution of family, in fact, rotates around her. In fact, women are not treated well, as they ought to be, neither in the East nor in the West

WOMEN'S MORAL AND RELIGIOUS POSITION :

The restoration of the position of women to their rightful and natural status is one of the greatest contribution which Islam made to human society. Islam removed all the injustices, oppressions and unequal situations from each and every walk of human life. From the moral and religious point, there is no distinction between man and woman in Islam. In the matter of doing good and bad, earning reward and punishment, in consequence both man and woman have an independent identity of their own. Each is responsible for his or her own individual actions and deeds. God has laid down very clear and explicit injunctions in this respect. Everyone is to make an effort individually to save himself or herself from the hellfire.

“ And thus their Sustainer answer their [people’s] prayers: I shall not lose sight of the labor of any of you who labors [in My way], be it man or woman: each of you is an issue of the other....”

[The Qur’an - 3 : 195]

“ Whosoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, provided he [or she] is a believer, We will surely grant him [or her] life, a pure life in this world. And We reward such people [in the Hereafter] according to their best deeds.”

[The Qur’an - 16 : 97]

Male and female, in fact, are the two equally important wheels of the carriage of human culture and civilization. If one is neglected, or underrated, the balance will break, the carriage will not serve the purpose effectively and efficiently. Both must be inspired with equal emphasis to fulfill their respective obligations to the society. Each must get equal opportunity to play his or her role with confidence to get the best reward. See how beautifully Islam puts this balanced role of women in a scenario, so that they must equally feel encouraged and inspired to play their part vigorously and enthusiastically on an equal footing with men in building a just, stable and balanced society which Islam intends to create, promote and sustain.

“ Verily, for all men and women who have surrendered themselves unto God, and all believing men and believing women, and all truly devout men and truly devout women, and all men and women who are true to their words, and all men and women who are patient in adversity, and all men and women who humble themselves [before god], and all men and women who give in charity, and all self-denying men and self-denying women, and all men and women who are mindful of their chastity, and all men and women who remember God unceasingly: for [all of] them has God readied forgiveness of sins and a mighty reward.”

[The Qur'an - 33 : 35]

Just think over this Verse and see whatever talents, qualities and distinctions men can achieve or claim, the same perfection women can also attain and claim for themselves. God has created no bar between the two sexes or prohibited women from any of them. Both can be the best in their respective domains.

In another Verse, God acknowledges and pinpoints the natural differences that men and women possess in each others physical formation, beauty and inherent natural qualities of heart and mind. These areas should not form the basis of competition among the sexes. They are God-gifted and a competition in any of those fields will destroy the balanced growth of the society as we see around us today. Rather, the field of competition between the two sexes is the spiritual emancipation, seeking His pleasure and excellence in piety. This domain is open and limitless for competition between the two genders.

“ If you avoid the great sins which you have been enjoined to shun, We shall efface your [minor] bad deeds, and shall cause you to enter an abode of glory [heaven].”

“Hence, do not covet the bounties which God had bestowed more abundantly on some of you than others. Men shall have a benefit from what they earn, and women shall have benefit from what they earn. Ask, therefore, God [to give you] out of His bounty: behold, God has indeed full knowledge of everything.”

[The Qur'an - 4 : 31-32]

LEGAL STAUS OF WOMEM :

There is one more important point for women to understand. With the advent of Islam, for the first time in human history women were given a legal status. They were given the right to have their personal property, maintain it separately, and use it the way they liked. A woman inherits property both from father and husband. Women can run their own business independently. But one thing must be made clear at this stage. Though Islam accepts and promotes the legal status of women, legally they are not always at the same par with men, and there are natural reasons for that.

1. Islam gives the right to women as mothers, daughters and wives to inherit but not with an equal share. The share of daughters is half in comparison to sons.

“ Concerning [the inheritance of] your children, God enjoins [this] upon you: the male shall have the equal of two female’s share:”

[The Qur’an - 4 : 11]

Similarly, the share of mothers is half of the fathers’ in inheritance. The reason is very simple to understand. Islam puts the entire burden of family maintenance on man. He has to provide shelter, food, clothing and other necessities of life to his wife and children. From his physical structure, energy and capacities, this burden has rightly been placed on man not on woman. She is completely free from all the obligations in this respect. That is why men have been given double the women’s share in inheritance. Whatever girls get, they take it to their husband’s home and keep it as their personal property. Her maintenance and care are the responsibility of her husband. This allocation of share is just, fair and natural to the circumstances and the unique position in which women have been placed, all rights but no financial responsibility on them.

2. Under the Law of Witness, the witnesses can be either two men or, if two men are not available, then one man and two women. It is explicitly clear in the Qur’an.

“And call upon two of your men to act as witness; and if two men are not available, then a man and two women from among such as are acceptable to you as witness, so that if one of them should make a mistake, the other could remind her.....”

[The Qur’an - 2 : 282]

God has clearly mentioned the reason for this difference in the law of witness, i.e., if one woman forgets, the other will remind her. This is the most natural provision provided by God, in consideration of the nature and the physical build up of women. Who can be better than the Creator Himself to know her shortcomings. Forgetfulness can also occur in men, but there are more chances of forgetfulness in women than men. God knows her temperament, her sentimentalism, and menses periods when many women become sick, feel irritated and become less balanced. There may be some exceptions but rules are not made for exceptions. This is the general provision of the law as ordained by God. It is genuine and hence is to be accepted as a binding rule. Women feel secure knowing that God recognizes their legal status and nobody can take it away.

However, it can be stated at this stage that there is a school of thought amongst the Muslim jurists who is of the opinion that this particular section of the Laws of Witness applies to financial situations. It should, therefore, be remain restricted to financial transactions only. This interpretation goes in favor of women. It presents their legal position in a much broader spectrum.

Those liberal institutions who are creating a hue and a cry regarding these two restrictions are giving a wrong connotation to the concept of women's freedom. They are throwing women out of their secure homes and making them "society girls," spoiling their modesty and chastity and, thus, bent upon breaking the last remnants of the family system. If you prepare a balance sheet of what Islam gives to women and what little it denies, and then compare it with what the so-called liberal movements or the modernists offer with what she will be deprived of, you will see the balance will be in favor of Islam and what it offers and guarantees.

THE THREE ASPECTS/POSITIONS OF WOMEN :

Now let us see what Islam provides for women in their different capacities. It should be studied from three angles. She holds three natural positions from birth to death.

1. As a mother;
2. As a daughter;
3. As a wife

AS A MOTHER :

I have already discussed this aspect and showed, in the previous Chapter, that as a mother a woman enjoys a great many rights, a very highly elevated position and much prestige. She is the anchor of the family. Her rights are three times more than those of the father, because of the toils which she sustains in bearing and rearing the child, especially at the time of birth. "Heaven lies under the feet of the mother." She is literally the queen of her home. Islam, granting this unique position to women, has done one of the greatest favors that human society could offer to mothers. In spite of all the love and devotion to the mother, the children belong to the father. In case of separation or divorce, children go to the custody of the father and the mother is set free totally with no liability for the children but with unlimited and unrestricted right to see and meet her children. She is free to remarry or live a life of her own within the Code of Conducts of Islam. The blessings of Islam to mothers are beyond the imagination of any secular or religious system.

AS A DAUGHTER :

Think about the environment before the coming of Muhammad as the last Prophet of God. Practically speaking daughters were buried alive after birth. They were considered as a disgrace for the family, especially by the father. They had no right to inherit. But Prophet Muhammad ushered in a revolution in this concept. He categorically asserted that it is not a disgrace at all to be the father of girls. He forcefully advocated this through his traditions.

It is narrated by Anas bin Malik that the Messenger of Allah said,

"Whosoever takes care of two girls till the time they reach maturity. then, on the Day of Judgment, that person will rise along with him as close as his two fingers which he displayed to his companions [The prophet joined his two fingers and showed he and I would be like this]."

[Quoted by Muslim in his collection]

In another tradition the Messenger of God asserted,

" Wherever the girls are born and the parents give them proper education, training and care, they [these girls] will become a protective shield for them against the hellfire."

[Narrated by Anas bin Malik and quoted in Muslim]

Prophet Muhammad himself had four daughters. He loved each of them immensely. In his life-pattern, there is a model for all of us to see how he loved and took care each of them. He married each of them to the best men of his society and was very fond of his two grand sons and grand daughters from his beloved daughters. One can well imagine the manner in which he used to treat his daughters.

Whenever, after marriage, Fatima, his beloved daughter, came to the Prophet's house, he used to receive her by standing, make room for her to sit, spread his shawl for her to sit. He used to call his daughters as "part of his heart."

This is the Prophet's tradition regarding daughters. It is a model for every Muslim to follow. That is the reason Muslim parents love their daughters exceedingly, even if they are numerous. They follow their Prophet and his tradition meticulously and with reverence.

There is another important right that daughters enjoy in Islam. They cannot be married to anyone without their prior consent. There is an important procedure before marriage takes place. The counsel of the bridegroom must first go to the bride and ask her consent in the presence of two witnesses. If she gives her consent explicitly in clear terms, only then the marriage will take place.

AS WIFE :

There is a delicate point to understand in the beginning. In the case of the mother, though her moral rights and the right to have preferential treatment are three times more than the father, in terms of law, the father is the head of the family. Similarly, in the family system, in order to run the family efficiently and without any chaos, the husband is the superintendent of the house. As such, he is the manager incharge of the family system. If the case is not so and no one has the right to make the final and binding decision, the family system might, simply, end in fiasco. But this position is not arbitrary. God has given substantial reasons for this position of husband in the family.

" Men are in charge of women, because God has made one of them to excel the other, and because they [men] spend of their property [for the

support of women]. So the righteous women are the truly devout ones who guard the intimacy which God has [ordained to be] guarded. As for those from whom ye fear rebellion, admonish them and banish them to bed apart and scourge them [as the last resort]. If thereupon, they follow you, do not seek a way against them. Behold, God is indeed most High, Exalted, Great.”

[The Qur'an - 4 : 34]

This Verse explains why the position of men supersedes in the family system. What is expected of a good wife? How should she live and behave? What are her responsibilities? She is the custodian of everything of her husband, if he is not at home. She is to protect her modesty, his secrets and property in his absence. It also suggests the ways how to resolve the family feuds. And above all, when she is behaving nicely, husband has no right to find faults with her. Thus Islam protects the family, the rights of the husband and wife and suggests ways and means how to resolve the differences within the family.

Maintaining this balance in the administration of the family system, I would like to quote some traditions of the Messenger of God which will go a long way to maintain the requisite balance in the family.

Abu Hurairah narrates this tradition from the collection of Tirmizi. The Messenger of God said,

“He is the perfect in faith, one who is the best in morality and the best among you is the one who is good to his wife.”

The wife of the Messenger of God, Ai'sha, narrates that the Prophet said,

“Be aware! he is the best among you who is best to his family members and be aware! I am the best amongst you who is giving the best treatment to his family members.”

Bukhari, in his collection, quotes from the Messenger of God,

“The wife is the master of her husband's house and she is responsible for her actions within her domain.”

Now I would like to conclude this Chapter by quoting two traditions of the Messenger of God which should be guiding factor for a believer of both sexes.

1. The best possession of this world is a righteous wife :

It is narrated by Sa'uban. *He said that we, the companions of the Prophet, were traveling with the Messenger of God when the Verse was revealed to him that condemns the hoarding of gold and silver. Upon this they asked the Prophet, 'they wished they could know what is the best wealth to hoard.' Then the Messenger of God advised, " the tongue that remembers God, the heart that is filled with the inspiration of thankfulness to God and the good wife who helps her husband to march ahead on the path of righteousness."*

2. The wife is the caretaker of her home :

The messenger of God said, " Each of you is the caretaker and protector and each will be accountable for what is in his or her protection. The husband is accountable for his family members and the wife is accountable for the home of her husband and his/her children."

From what I have presented above from the Qur'an and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad, it is clear that Islam promotes a well balanced family system in which both husband and wife have equal part to play in their respective capacities. Both have equally important roles to play to run the carriage of human civilization smoothly and be complementary to each other.

In the complex structure of the family system, one is the earning hand and the protector of the family. The other is the hand that bears and nurtures the generations that keep the development of the society along a balance growth, grooms the personality that fights for the cause of righteousness, and protects the equilibrium of the family system that saves human society from falling into disarray. Thus, the functions of both the father and the mother or husband and wife, are different but complimentary and supplementary to each other.

Islam creates this environment by giving a unique status to women. Mother is the queen to run the home smoothly, creating a healthy

environment for the proper growth of children. Both are indispensable to each other. If one is allowed to usurp the rights of the other or one is given the opportunity to overlap the position of the other, the growth of the family will become unbalanced. Over and above, it is God-consciousness which keeps both the husband and wife functioning well and fulfilling their respective responsibilities as ordained by their Creator and Sustainer, with the realization and fear that they all are accountable to Him for their respective roles. Thus, the status of women in Islam is unique and full of blessings for humanity to reap and survive for the betterment, both of men and women and their abode, the earth.

CHAPTER - VIII**SOCIAL JUSTICE IN ISLAM**

Islam has provided guiding principles to run all spheres of human life smoothly and efficiently, based on justice and fair play. The entire socio-economic-political system depends on the sovereignty of God, vicegerency of man on earth, equality of human beings, economic opportunity to all and sundry, flow of wealth from haves to have-nots, justice for all with no discrimination, consultation at every stage, and accountability in the life Hereafter. I will quote here from the Qur'an to substantiate the above assertions.

1. Sovereignty of God :

“ Unto Allah belongs all that is in the heaven and all that is in earth; and whether ye make known what is in your mind or hide it, Allah will bring you to account for it. He will forgive whom He will and He will punish whom He will, for Allah has the power to will anything.”

[The Qur'an - 2 : 284]

2. Obedience to God, His Messenger and Head of the state :

“ O ye who believe! Obey God, and obey the Messenger and those of you who are in authority [from the believers]; and if ye have a dispute concerning any matter, refer it to God and the messenger if you are [in truth] believers in God and the Last day. This is the best for you, and best in the end.”

[The Qur'an - 4 : 59]

3. Right to Franchise and Transfer of Trust :

“ Behold, God bids you to deliver all that you have been entrusted with [including the right to franchise] unto those who are entitled thereto, and whenever you judge between people, to judge with justice...”

[The Qur'an - 4 : 58]

4. Islam, a perfect and complete way of life :

I am quoting the Verse which was last revealed to Prophet Muhammad during his Hajj at Makkah in the tenth year of Hijrah [Islamic Calendar]. It heralded the completion of Guidance from God and its total implementation in the form of an Islamic State in the Arabian Peninsula. Within 83 days of its revelation, the Messenger of God passed away from this world. This Verse confirms the perfection of everything - the guidance, the Islamic state, the blessings of God on Muslims and humanity, the mission of Prophet Muhammad on earth, and the institution of prophethood, each in its minutest detail.

“ [God declares] : Today have I perfected your Deen [the way of life] for you, and have bestowed upon you the full measure of My blessings, and have chosen for you Islam as religion [Deen]..... .”

[The Qur'an - 5 : 3]

5. Resolve your affairs with consultation :

“.....So pardon them [Muslims] and ask forgiveness for them and consult with them upon the conduct of the affairs. And when thou are resolved [after consultation], then put thy trust in God. Lo! God loves those who put their trust [in Him].”

[The Qur'an - 3 : 159]

“ And those who answer the call of their Lord and are constant in prayers, and whose rule [in all matters of common concern] is consultation among themselves; and who spend on others out of what We provide for them in sustenance.”

[The Qur'an - 42 : 38]

6. Believers share their wealth with the poor and needy :

“ And [would assign] in all that they possessed a due share for the poor and the needy [the outcast].”

[The Qur'an - 51 : 19]

“ And in whose wealth there is a right acknowledged for the beggar [the poor] and the destitute.”

[The Qur'an - 70 : 24-25]

7. Objective behind the Uneven Distribution of wealth:

“ But is it they [the people] who distribute thy Sustainer’s mercy? [Nay, as] it is We who distribute their means of livelihood among them in the life of this world, and raise some of them by degrees above others, to the end that they may avail themselves of one another’s help [that some of them may take labor from others]; and the mercy of thy Lord is better than [the wealth] that they may amass.”

[The Qur'an - 43 : 32]

8. Flow of wealth from Haves to Have-nots:

“ The alms [Zakah - a compulsory transfer of wealth at certain fixed rate on the accumulated wealth on crossing a fixed limit] are [meant] only for the poor and the needy, and those who are incharge thereof [for the collection of alms], and those whose hearts are to be won over, and for the freeing of human beings from bondage, and [for] those who are overburdened with debts, and [for every struggle] in God’s cause, and [for] the wayfarers : [this is] an ordinance from God [a duty imposed by God] - and God is All-knowing, Wise.”

[The Qur'an - 9 : 60]

“ And know whatever ye take as spoils of war, one-fifth thereof belongs to God and the Apostle and for the kinsmen, and for the orphans, and the needy, and the wayfarer...”

[The Qur'an - 8 : 41]

“ And whatever God gives as spoils unto His Messenger from the people of the township, it is for God and His Messenger and the near of kin [of deceased believers], and the orphans, and the needy, and the wayfarer so that it [the wealth] may not become [a benefit] going round and round among such of you as may [already] be rich.....”

[The Qur'an - 59 : 7]

The Qur'an, thus, sets the process for the transfer of wealth from the haves to the have-nots and stops its accumulation in the hands of a few. In

addition. The Laws of Inheritance further accelerate the transfer of wealth and do away with its concentration in the hands of the few fortunate ones.

In this respect, the Messenger of God emphatically ordained, "Take the wealth from yours rich and distribute it to yours poor and needy." The Islamic state established by Prophet Muhammad and his Caliphs acted upon these ordinances from God and poverty was eliminated from the Kingdom of God established by them within a few years time. If it could be achieved at that time, it can be done today, if we sincerely act upon the Qur'an and follow the life-pattern of Prophet Muhammad in its totality.

9. God dislikes hoarding of wealth and miserliness :

" O ye who believe! Lo many of the [Jewish] rabbis and the[Christian] monks devour the wealth of mankind wantonly and debar [men] from the way of God. They who hoard up gold and silver [wealth]and spend it not in the way of God, upto them give tidings [O Muhammad] of a painful doom.

On the day when it will [all] be heated in the fire and their foreheads and their flanks and their backs will be branded therewith [and it will be said unto them] : 'Here is that which ye hoarded for yourselves. Now taste of what you used to hoard.' "

[The Qur'an - 9 : 34 -35]

10. Prohibition of devouring others' wealth wrongfully :

" O you who attained faith! Do not devour one another's possessions [wealth] wrongfully except by way of trade based on mutual consent and kill not one another. Lo! God is ever Merciful unto us.

Whoso does that through aggression and injustice, We shall cast him into the fire, and that is ever easy for God."

[The Qur'an - 4 : 29-30]

11. An Interest-free economy :

“ O you who have attained the faith! Do not gorge yourselves on interest -doubling and redoubling it. Be conscious of God, so that you may attain to a happy state.”

[The Qur'an - 3 ; 130]

“ As for those who devour interest, they behave as the one whom the Devil [Satan] has confounded with his touch. Seized in this state they say: Trade is just like interest whereas God permits trading and forbids interest...”

“God deprives interest-gains of all blessings, whereas He blesses charitable deeds with manifold increase. And God does not love anyone who is stubbornly ingrate and persists in sinful ways.”

[The Qur'an - 2 : 275, 276]

The Verses which I have quoted above, present the outlines of the system through which Islam wants to establish Al-Qist [Justice] and fair play in human society. Islam prohibits all the means of exploitation, including interest; introduces a political system based on the Sovereignty of God, general franchise, consultation, and obedience to God, Prophet and the Amir [the elected head of the Islamic state]; justly implements its own economic system which automatically transfers wealth from the haves to the have-nots, guarantees human rights [as discussed earlier] ; and develops a society wherein all are to work according to their capacity, honestly and sincerely, and take or enjoy as much as he or she can earn as per his or her efforts and capacities. But those who are poor, needy, underfed, incapacitated, unemployed or under-employed, the Islamic state will take care of them from the special funds which are raised for this purpose, i.e., through the institution of Zakah.

Here, in Islam, the rehabilitation of the poor and needy does not fall on the government exchequer as the welfare states around the world have resorted to and have gone or fast going into bankruptcy. This is the arrangement of God for the deprived, depressed and have-nots. This is the only system that can bring the economy to the “optimum point” where the curves of demand and supply will vary marginally for a very short period, otherwise, will remain constant in every phase and sector of the economy in the long run. The Islamic state will then look after the rehabilitation of the economy of other poor and under-developed regions or nations of the

world, with no strings attached to its help, loans and advances. What a boon it would be for the suffering humanity.

This is the most accomplished form of Social Justice which Islam offers to its followers and to the entire human race. Whosoever accepts it, implements it in its totality, these and many more untold blessings of God and the system are in waiting for them. It is the very objective for which God sent His messengers and books of Guidance to human beings. The directives of the Qur'an are very clear in this respect.

“ We verily sent our messengers with clear proofs and revealed with them the Scriptures and the Balance [wherewith to weigh right and wrong], so that mankind may observe equity [justice]”

[The Qur'an - 57 : 25]

Political rights with equality and economic freedom with justice and fair play, without any discrimination, are the surest way to establish Social Justice in the human society. Without meeting these two pre-requisites, social justice can neither be achieved nor be maintained indefinitely. It will be possible only with the people who nurture constant fear of God [God-consciousness] at heart, are guided with an ever-present sense of accountability on the Day of Judgment and struggle to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. This will keep the people motivated, in general, and the rulers at the helm of affairs in a constant frame of mind to be honest and sincere to the people. That is the boon which Islam offers to suffering humanity. Islam, thus, presents a practical, workable, feasible and an ever-lasting system of Social Justice through the teachings of the Qur'an and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad. Its invitation is wide open and will remain open till eternity. It is only for those who will make an attempt for it and seek Guidance from their Creator and Sustainer, in order to live in peace, prosperity and harmony with self, society and humanity at large.

CHAPTER - IX**ISLAM - THE ONLY CHOICE**

The glimpses which I have presented so far from the Qur'an are for people to think about and resolve to study and know the system in detail. **The Qur'an is the Book of Wisdom** which I have introduced briefly through these pages. The Qur'an has discussed different aspects of human life, some places in detail, and in some places it tells only the salient features in principle, leaving the rest for the people to work out its details, which must be in conformity with the basic teachings of the Qur'an and Prophet's traditions. From what I have discussed in the previous Chapters, it appears that Islam is a comprehensive system of life and meets all the basic needs of man and his society, both in individual and collective spheres of life. Man needs a just and peaceful society to lead a balanced and harmonious life on earth and Salvation in the Hereafter.

Keeping the above in view, it can be logically concluded that Islam is the only correct way of life, it is the only choice for man to follow to avoid all the *problems and pitfalls* which the world is facing today. Why Islam is the only choice? I would like to share the reasons with the readers to make the above assertion clear and understandable. This will facilitate our readers to understand Islam in a better perspective.

1. ISLAM - THE CODE OF THIS COSMOS :

An in-depth study of Heaven and Earth and what they contain will convince the rational human beings that all the animate and inanimate objects of this cosmos are Muslim [obedient to God] as they meticulously follow the objectives for which they were created. It equally applies to humans to the extent the physical aspect of his or her life is concerned. [In his moral life, man has a choice to follow or to deny the Creator and the guidance which comes from Him, and that I have discussed in the previous Chapters.] These objects of nature have no choice but to follow their Creator the way they are created. The Qur'an addresses human beings and exhorts them to think over this aspect.

“ Do they seek, perchance, a faith other than the system of God, when unto Him submits whosoever is in the heaven and the earth willingly or unwillingly, since unto Him all must return.”

[The Qur'an - 3 : 83]

There is a clear warning from God to those who refuse to surrender to Him :

“ For, if one goes in search of a religion other than Islam [self-surrendering to God], it will never be accepted from him [or her], and in the life to come he [or she] shall be among the lost”.

[The Qur'an - 3 : 85]

2. SYNCHRONIZING THE SYSTEM FROM HEAVEN TO EARTH:

Since Islam is the religion of nature, it follows the Creator meticulously. Hence, there is no chaos, confusion or duplicity in nature. Everything is floating smoothly, bounded by the laws, principles, trajectories or objectives for which each one is meant or created. They are the most law abiding “citizens” of nature. So there is a peace and harmony everywhere. The entire machinery of nature is running extremely well within its bounds.

Man in his physical life is following the laws and system under which he is created. The laws of his birth, growth, decline and death are fixed. The laws governing the functions of his body-parts, both inside and outside, are fixed too. No one can alter them. You cannot take the function of walking by hands and of writing by legs. Functions of each part of the body are fixed and they are obediently following the laws of the Creator. Hence, the physical part of man is a Muslim as he/she has no choice in this matter.

In the optional or moral life, man is free. By his own free will, he has the choice either to go on his own way or follow the guidance from God. The choice is that of man as discussed earlier. If he goes by his free choice on his own way, he fills the earth with inequalities, disorders and bloodshed, and if he by his own free will follows the guidance, he gets peace and

harmony on earth and Salvation in the life Hereafter. The Choice is wide open. In the case of humans, there is no compulsion as ordained by God.

“ [In the matter of adopting the religion] there is no compulsion in religion. The right direction is henceforth distinct from error. And he who rejects false deities and believes in God has grasped a firm handhold which will never break. God is Hearer and Knower.”

[The Qur'an - 2 : 256]

Examine the results of the two choices. One leads man to chaos and destruction and the other to peace and tranquillity. Now look into the two scenarios which are the outcome of man's free choice. If man goes by his free choice and leads a life based on man-made laws, he creates chaos in human society and destroys this worldly life with grave consequences in this life and encountering severe punishment in the life Hereafter. But if man, by his own free choice, obeys his Creator and Sustainer, he synchronizes the entire system from heaven to earth.

As discussed earlier, the entire cosmos and man's physical life are Muslim [obedient to their Creator] as they all are following the Physical Laws of the Authority that created them. Therefore, they are in peace and harmony. If, like wise, humans follow the Moral Laws, the Guidance, from the Creator in their optional or moral life, then, human life synchronizes with nature. Now there will be only one authority or system which is obeyed and followed from heaven down to the earth. Both the physical world and the moral-self of man will follow One and only One God who is the Creator and Sustainer of the entire system prevailing in this cosmos and controlling the destiny of human species without any exception. In return, the human society will be filled with blessings and mercy from God. Both the sky and the earth will shower blessings after blessings on human society in abundance.

Historically, whenever man could synchronize the prevailing system from heaven to earth by one and only one system, i.e., a life of subordination to God, human society was filled with immense blessings. In the time of Prophets David and Solomon and in the time of Prophet Muhammad and his Caliphs, human society had seen the justice and equality prevailing in every sector of human life and everywhere beyond, as they established the Divine Guidance or the Kingdom of God on earth in the moral life of man. These were the golden periods of human history. The rest are gloomy and full of tyranny, oppression and inequalities. The condition of human

society demands this synchronization for its own benefit and for the safety of mankind. Islam should now be the choice of man by his/her own free will. If not, human society will remain struggling within dark shadows and quagmires, and only God knows how long?

3. COMPLETION OF THE EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS :

The Universe is constantly going through an evolutionary process. It is expanding in its outer bounds at a speed of 83,000 miles per second. The earth became habitable for man only through a long evolutionary process of cooling down. The theory of evolution is still trying to find out the ancestors of man. Man has marched through the dark period of stone age to the present civilized era of cyber-space. Is man going to stop at this point? Has he achieved perfection? No. The march towards perfection must continue. This is in the nature of man. He always tries to go for the best. Man will achieve his/her best only when he/she lives in complete harmony with nature. And what is nature? It is nothing but the will of the Creator and Sustainer which controls and prevails over each and every animate or inanimate object of this cosmos. Thus, living in harmony with nature will be possible when man gives himself up in total and complete subordination to his/her Creator as is the case with nature. This is the unique position which only a true Muslim [one who totally submits to God] can attain.

Here, I would like to quote a declaration of God which He disclosed through Prophet Muhammad. It is narrated by Abu Hurairah, a famous companion of Prophet Muhammad, who said:

“Allah says: Who does harm to my friend [a true Muslim], I become his enemy; My servant always tries to seek closeness to Me through offering extra non-obligatory prayers and worship till I become his [or her] friend; So when I become his [or her] friend, I become his ear through which he hears; I become his eyes, through which he sees, I become his hand through which he holds; I become his legs, through which he walks; this servant when he asks something, I give him; and if he seeks My refuge, I protect him; I don’t delay or hesitate to do anything for him except the inevitable death which he cannot escape.”

[Quoted by Mishquat Vol. I from Bukhari]

Man has to reach that stage when his will become the will of God. That will be the perfection of the human being. A society, when it is made up of such men and women, it will really be a blessing for humans on earth. Man can achieve and reach this state of perfection when he/she enters into the fold of God and becomes His servant. He or she then lives and struggles only for His pleasure for the whole of His or her life. The evolutionary process of man's existence on earth demands this ultimate realization that he or she is to come in complete communion with his/her Creator, where the Sustainer Himself takes care of His dutiful servant.

4. MAXIMIZATION OF PERSONAL PLEASURE :

In this wordly life, every individual tries his/her best to maximize his/her pleasure. One can well imagine the efforts, the means and the sacrifice which a man exerts for the attainment of his pleasure on earth, and that continues for the whole of his life. But he cannot always achieve it. The limitation of time, space and resources hinder the achievement. So he has to overcome these shortcomings. Man is trying his level best to conquer the time and space difference. Can he do it? Can he travel in no time? It is not possible in this life, even if he travels in zero time and becomes a multi-billionaire. The earthly life and the existence of man is conditioned here with the measurement of time, space and resources. So he will not be able to maximize his pleasure, under any circumstances on earth.

For the maximization of personal pleasure, God has made another world. It is called, in His terminology, Paradise, where the limitations of time, space and that of resources will not exist. Therein, whatever man will desire to have, possess, eat, see and enjoy will be available to him/her instantly, in no time. Man will be the same but with different capabilities, senses and powers. This will be the blessings of God for the inhabitants of paradise. Who will inhabit this land of tomorrow? It will be inhabited by those sons and daughters of Adam and Eve who passed their life on earth in total subordination to their Creator and tried in their life-long pursuits to attain His pleasure. The future "**citizens**" of that promised land, Paradise, will be the most obedient servants of God, the true Muslims who live and die for Him and who struggle for the whole of their life to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. These slaves will be His trusted Muslim men and women who will inhabit the next world, Paradise. The rest, the undesirables, will be thrown in the hellfire.

The equation is very clear. If one is to maximize his pleasure, he can do it only in the next life, and not in this world. This world is a ground for test

and for struggle and the next world is to reap the harvest of what you did here. So, if you are desirous to be the most favorable citizens of Paradise tomorrow, you must enter into the fold of God today, follow the Guidance laid down in the Qur'an and in the traditions of Prophet Muhammad. For the maximization of pleasure, Islam is the key, the only choice, which may open the gates of Paradise, if followed with total devotion and dedication to God and His Messenger.

5. THE LAST RESORT :

Humanity has been experimenting for the last many centuries with man-made laws and isms to make the abode of man a cradle of peace, but could not succeed. As discussed earlier, persons like Fukuyama are looking towards liberal democracy as the goal of mankind. But it has failed, and failed bitterly to deliver goodness to human society. It could not bring peace to human society, rather, has filled the heart of people and nations with the bitter taste of hate and frustration. When all man-made laws have failed; when Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism are not in a position to deliver the requisite amount of good to humans and resolve the problems which humanity is confronted with, the only choice left for man is to resort to Islam as a way of life both for his individual and family life, and for his collective affairs.

Islam provides a perfect Code of conduct in the Qur'an, as depicted throughout my discussion, a complete life-pattern of Prophet Muhammad to follow as guide and model in every walk of life; a system to establish justice and fair play in every sphere of human life; and a process to attain perfection and maximization of human pleasure. If the case is so, the future religion of mankind should and must be only Islam, especially when man has no alternative except that of Islam. It is now the last resort of man to attain the peace of mind, solace to the heart, and equilibrium with self and nature around him or her. The sooner he/she gets rid of his/her prejudices against Islam, the better it would be for mankind. The Qur'an is full of Wisdom and invites each of you to study and understand it with the best possible efforts that a man or a woman can muster for the betterment of self, the family system, the community of nations, and humanity at large.