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TOWARDS AN ISLAMIC JURISPRUDENCE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Islam is considered a comprehensive way of life whose teachings cover, directly or indirectly, every possible human relationship including that with the environment. These teachings are primarily available in the revealed knowledge which comprises the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. There remains two other sources, namely the *Ijma`* and *Qiyas*; they are dependent on the first two in different ways and degrees. The relationship is so complex that it cannot be represented in this paper for brevity. It is discussed, however, in various Islamic literature, for example *The Religion of Islam* (maulana Muhammad 'Ali).

In what follows, some of the verses that define the epistemological parameters of the Qur'an are considered. One verse, at the beginning of *Surat al-Baqarah*, presents the Qur'an as a book of guidance:

"This Book, there is no doubt in it, is a guide to those who keep their duty." (2:2)

Moreover, Allah shows that the Qur'an encompasses the foundations for knowledge and ethics:

"We have not neglected anything in the Book" (6:38)

In addition, the Qur'an announces that Islam, as a religion, has been perfected by Allah. It is considered a comprehensive way of life which accommodates every aspect of it. The Islamic world-view is established upon the very notion of Islam as a perfect religion:

"This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favor to you and chosen for you Islam as a religion." (Qur'an, 5:3)

It is no wonder, in the light of what has been discussed above, that a jurisprudence of the environment is founded. All aspects of the environment, discussed in this paper, are presented from within the Islamic world-view and not as something alien to it.

VICEGERENCY (KHILAFAH)

The human being, in the Islamic world-view, is considered a vicegerent (*khalifah*):

"And when thy Lord said to the angels, 'I am going to place a ruler in the earth,' they said: 'Wilt Thou place in it such as make mischief in it and shed blood? And we celebrate Thy praise and extol Thy holiness.' He said: 'Surely I know what you know not.'" (Qur'an, 2:30)

The earth is made available for human use, without abuse or misuse. There are numerous verses in the Qur'an that could be cited in this respect, but it suffices to mention three of them:

"And He has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the heavens and in the earth, all, from Himself. Surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect." (45:13)

"See you not that Allah has made subservient to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and granted

to you His favors complete outwardly and inwardly?" (31:20)

"He has made subservient to you the night and the day and the sun and the moon. And the stars are made subservient by His command. Surely there are signs in this for a people who understand." (16:12)

In his capacity as a vicegerent, the human being is perceived as the trustee of the earth. He is not supposed to cause corruption in any form on earth (i.e. the environment). Life on earth entails great responsibilities. It is a test with accountability. It is followed by either reward or punishment. These meanings are mentioned in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. Vicegerency as a test is found in the following verse:

"And He it is Who has made you successors in the land and exalted some of you in rank above others, that He may try you by what He has given you. Surely thy Lord is Quick in requiting (evil), and He is surely the Forgiving, the Merciful." (6:165)

On the other hand, this vicegerency is subjected to observation:

"We made you rulers in the land after them, so that We might see how you act." (Qur'an, 10:14)

It is rather clear, now, that the Islamic world-view indicates that vicegerency on earth forms a test which includes how human beings relate to the environment. Is it going to be based upon divine instructions, or upon personal desires and conjectures that might lead to the destruction of our environment?

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Institute for Islamic Studies and Publications

EDITORIAL

The declaration of the institution of *khilafah*, which Allah has informed the angels about, was reinforced by the verse that shows that Allah has taught Adam the names of all things (2:31). This leads us to realize that there is an organic connection between proper knowledge and right behavior. Indeed, knowledge becomes a tool that renders humanity morally responsible. Therefore, vicegerency is based upon knowledge that enables the human being to be a care taker of the environment in which he dwells. Humanity should behave in such a way that would maintain the balance that exists within the environment.

That the cosmic order and natural phenomena, however, will come to an end, is reflected in this verse:

"He made the sun and the moon subservient (to you). Each one runs to an appointed term. He regulates the affair, making clear the messages that you may be certain of the meeting with your Lord." (13:2)

There are other verses that point to the temporal nature of the subjected elements. The reason behind highlighting the temporality of things is to remind people of the Hereafter. It is hoped that once people are conscientious of the limitation of life on earth, they will behave in a positive and constructive way. The end result will be a human psyche that is constantly reminded of the Hereafter.

TAKING CARE OF THE ENVIRONMENT AS AN ACT OF FAITH

The basic role of the human being on earth is to worship Allah:

"And I have not created the jinn and the men except that they should serve Me." (51:56)

To serve God or to worship Him is a comprehensive way that covers every aspect of life. Fulfilling all that God has demanded from us in terms of praying, fasting, *zakah* and *hajj* indicates worshipping. The same could be said regarding any action that the human being performs in accordance with the Islamic world-view, as long as it is done for the sake of God.

Every act, as long as it is good and done for the sake of Allah, is considered an act of worshipping that generates reward in this life and the Hereafter. This is the 'via media' between two extremes; total disregard for the environment, and worshipping it as the case of nature worshipping.

The fact that protection of the environment is considered an act of worshipping does not mean that every component of the environment should be saved. In fact, it can be sometimes to the contrary. The Prophet stated that a person who uprooted a tree [which formed an obstacle] in the path of people, ended up in heavens.

The Islamic position forms a middle path between human behavior that has disregard to the environment and those who practically worship the environment or certain parts of it. While the Islamic view supports the protection of environment from the greedy behavior of human beings, it allows room for sustainable development.

THE IMPACT OF FAITH ON THE ENVIRONMENT

The Qur'an shows that there is a correlation between the behavior of people and the conditions of the environment. The right and moral behavior yield positive results:

"And if the people of the towns had believed and kept their duty, We would certainly have opened for them blessings from the heavens and the earth." (Qur'an, 7:96; see also 11:52)

The opposite is also true. Disbelief and swerving from the right path that God has designated for humanity will result in negative impact on the environment:

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For more Islamic articles in English, we recommend to the reader, in addition to *The Dawn*, magazines such as *The Message* and *The Call* (Trinidad), *The Light* (USA) and *Noor-I-Islam* (Canada), among others. Articles published in these magazines are also published in our Dutch edition for the readers in Suriname and Holland.

We wish all of you much reading pleasure.

"Do you then feel secure that He will not bring you low on a tract of land, or send on you a violent wind? Then you will not find a protector for yourselves. Or, do you feel secure that He will not take you back into it another time, then send on you a fierce gale and thus overwhelm you for your ungratefulness? Then you will not find any aider against Us in the matter." (Qur'an, 17:68-69; see also 13:13, 16:112, 18:42, 20:124)

The end result of disbelief or immoral acts, when they become prevalent, is the total destruction of the environment. Such is the story of Prophet Noah and the Flood which destroyed every thing within that community, except the Ark and its load of people and animals. The order that came to end the flood show that the water gushed and abated at God's command:

"And it was said: O earth, swallow thy water, and O cloud, clear away. And the water was made to abate, and the affair was decided, and it

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rested on the Judi, and it was said: Away with the iniquitous people!" (Qur'an, 11:44)

As a general rule, there is a direct relationship between wrong doing and calamities:

"And whatever misfortune befalls you, it is on account of what your hands have wrought and He pardons much." (Qur'an, 42:30)

"He has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, all, from Himself. Surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect."

The Holy Qur'an, chapter 45, verse 13

In addition, committing sin generates corruption everywhere:

"Corruption has appeared in the land and the sea on account of that which men's hands have wrought, that He may make them taste a part of that which they have done, so that they may return." (Qur'an, 30:41)

Corruption [fasad] in this context covers all kinds of material and spiritual damage.

The following verse shows that positive moral behavior leads to a better physical environment:

"And when your Lord made it known: If you are grateful, I will give you more." (Qur'an, 14:7)

THE ISLAMIC PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

1. Human Beings

Islam emphasized the sanctity of human life in the strongest possible terms:

"We prescribed for the Children of Israel that whoever kills a person, unless it be for manslaughter or for mischief in the land, it is as though he had killed all men. And whoever saves a life, it is as though he had saved the lives of all men." (Qur'an, 5:32)

The rulings of the *Shari'ah* aim at preserving the life of the human

being, even murderers. It is well-known that punishment for murder is death penalty. Nevertheless, the Qur'an encouraged the family of the murdered person to forfeit their right that the murderer be executed.^[1] For the same reason, committing suicide is prohibited.^[2]

Wars and ethnic conflicts remain a major factor in killing human beings and in the destruction of the environment. The Islamic position,

which is quite to the contrary of the picture depicted by the western media, states in clear terms that peace is the norm and war an exception. The Qur'an states that a Muslim should not wish to confront the enemies in the battlefield:

"Fighting is enjoined on you, though it is disliked by you." (2:216)^[3]

The *raison d'être* is to give priority to peaceful solutions whenever conflicts arise. In fact, the first thirteen years of the history of Islam in Makkah reflect passive resistance. Nevertheless, self-defense is permitted to protect Islam and Muslims. If Muslims have to go to war, then they have to abide by Islamic codes of conduct during warfare:

"Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you but be not aggressive. Surely Allah loves not the aggressors." (Qur'an, 2:190)^[4]

Accordingly, all weapons of mass destruction (just as for example anti-personnel mines) are not acceptable from an Islamic perspective. We should remember that the American use of atomic bombs against Japan, during World War II, is a much protested and regretted act. All chemical, biological and nuclear weapons should be prohibited world wide without any exceptions. It is not enough to have nuclear

non-proliferation treaties that exempt certain countries because they did not sign. If the super powers only head to the fact that humanity needs a safer and cleaner earth! No country should be able to stock weapons of mass destruction or non-conventional weapons.

The fact that the Muslims are subjected to different forms of attacks that range from ethnic cleansing to discrimination in the work place, should not be used by Muslims as a pretext to behave in the same way as their enemies:

"O you who believe, be upright for Allah, bearers of witness with justice; and let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably. Be just; that is nearer to observance of duty. And keep your duty to Allah." (Qur'an, 5:8)

Many of the conflicts around the world were/are fueled by inhuman ideologies that stress the supremacy of one "race" over the other. This form of social Darwinism was translated into a systematic program by the Nazis to annihilate other races. The Serbs performed some of the most heinous crimes against humanity in Bosnia and Kosovo, despite the fact that the "race" is the same! It is clear that Muslims in these cases were victimized because of their faith.

The Islamic world view does not permit any ideas of negative value judgment regarding the biological differences in terms of color and shape. They are to be perceived positively as signs, pointing to God:

"And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your tongues and colors. Surely there are signs in this for the learned." (Qur'an, 30:22)

The differences in the colors of people function exactly like those between animals, plants and inanimate objects:

"Don't you see that Allah sends down water from the clouds, then We bring forth therewith fruits of various hues? And in the mountains are streaks, white and red, of various hues and (others) intensely black. And of men and beasts and cattle there are various colors likewise. Those of His servants only who are possessed

of knowledge fear Allah. Surely Allah is Mighty, Forgiving.” (Qur’an, 35:27-28)

It appears that there aren’t many races; there is one human “race” reflecting many prisms. The beautiful different colors and shapes of flowers do not invite us to damage all but one. They are there as gifts and Signs from God to help us remember Him. As such, they should be appreciated and preserved.

The only legitimate differentiation in Islam is based upon moral, not physical character:

“O mankind, surely We have created you from a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other. Surely the noblest of you with Allah is the most dutiful of you. Surely Allah is Knowing, Aware.” (Qur’an, 49:13)

Tolerance regarding other beliefs is emphasized in the Qur’an in many contexts:

“Allah forbids you not respecting those who fight you not for religion, nor drive you forth from your homes, that you show them kindness and deal with them justly. Surely Allah loves the doers of justice.” (Qur’an, 60:8)

was revealed to Abraham, and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and (in) that which was given to Moses and Jesus, and (in) that which was given to the prophets from their Lord, we do not make any distinction between any of them and to Him (Allah) do we submit.” Qur’an, 2:136)

save humanity.

2. Animals

Islam has enjoined upon Muslims right relationship with animals. They are asked to treat animals well, and they are not allowed to kill animals except for food. Only in limited cases some animals are allowed to be killed when they endanger the life

“O you who believe, be upright for Allah, bearers of witness with justice; and let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably. Be just; that is nearer to observance of duty. And keep your duty to Allah. Surely Allah is Aware of what you do.”

The Holy Qur’an, chapter 5, verse 8

There are ways and means to protect the life of the human being in Islam. There is a broadly stated principle in the Qur’an which prohibits all harm:

“Cast not yourselves to perdition with your own hands and do good (to others). Surely Allah loves the doers of good.” (Qur’an, 2:195)

This verse highlights the dangers that fall within the responsibility of

of the human.

To slaughter an animal, one has to use a sharp object that will save the animal pain. Shaddad Ibn Aws reported that the Prophet said:

“Excel in slaughtering; sharpen your blade [so you may] relief your slaughtered [animal].”^[5]

People should behave with great responsibility regarding hunting. Hunting should be out of necessity; where necessity is defined in terms of need for food, where other means are not possible. One should also take into consideration the authorities determination of hunting seasons and the kind and number of animals and birds allowed to be hunted. Also, hunting tools that cause great pain should be prohibited. The latter include traps that lock on the leg of the animal causing pain and bleeding until the hunter returns, which could be for days!

Moreover, one should not take lightly the issue of killing, without any justification, even if the victim is a very small animal or bird. `Abdullah Ibn `Amr reported that the Prophet said:

“No human being kills a sparrow or [something] larger, without right, except that God will ask him about it (hold him responsible!) on the Day of Judgment.” It was said: “O Prophet of God!

“Do you not see that Allah sends down water from the clouds, then We bring forth therewith fruits of various hues? And in the mountains are streaks, white and red, of various hues and (others) intensely black. And of men and beasts and cattle there are various colors likewise. Those of His servants only who are possessed of knowledge fear Allah. Surely Allah is Mighty, Forgiving.”

The Holy Qur’an, chapter 35, verses 27-28

“Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good, they have their reward with their Lord, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve.” (Qur’an, 2:62)

“Say: we believe in Allah and (in) that which has been revealed to us, and (in) that which

the individual towards oneself. They include taking drugs, alcohol, tobacco or any other activity which might cause harm to the health.

Add to this gloomy picture adultery and common use of needles in drugs. As such, the number of people contracting AIDS is mushrooming. Against this background, the Islamic way of life provides a safety valve which, if accepted, can

What is its right?" He said: "Its right is that you slaughter it and eat it, not that you decapitate it and throw it!"^[6]

Animal rights groups deduce that it is imperative to respect these living beings, to protect their life, and not to touch them except for a need.

The ecologists see in these two narrations the necessity to preserve the components of the environment, and not to allow [destructive] playing which might lead to the annihilation and extinction of these components without any reason.

As for the economist, he understands that the hadith brings the attention to the imperative need to protect all resources. They should not be wasted in vain without any economic return. Killing an edible animal without eating it means the loss of a part of the national resources, albeit small.

The scholar of ethics realizes the comprehensive nature of Islamic ethics. He also sees how broad is the domain of responsibility which includes all living beings including animals and birds. Indeed, in other narrations, it includes inanimate objects.

The same applies to the scholar of education, for Islamic education has a broad horizon, and goes beyond religious education, which in the minds of many people is restricted to imbuing the creed, and teaching the rituals. It is education that encompasses every activity of the human which practiced in life: spiritual and material, religious and worldly, individual and social, theoretical and practical."^[7]

In addition, Islam prohibits the use of animals as targets for shooting. Ibn `Umar once passed by a group of youth, who were shooting their arrows at a bird, and whenever they miss the aim, the owner of the bird takes the arrow for himself. But when they saw Ibn `Umar they dispersed. He exclaimed: who did this? May he be cursed!^[8]

The Prophet cursed those who create a target out of a being with a soul.

Also animals should not be set against one another. This practice is associated nowadays with gambling. Ibn `Abbas reported a hadith

in which the Prophet prohibits this practice.^[9]

The *Shari`ah* aims to protect animals from abuse in the name of having fun or sport. It is clear that "wrestling" bulls cannot be accepted from an Islamic perspective as a sport.

To protect the animals, Islam has also looked into the load an animal can carry without harm. The Prophet prohibited riding on weak animals.^[10]

ble Sanctuary in Makkah, is to prohibit any act of killing, including hunting, by pilgrims. Also cutting the trees of the *Haram* is prohibited. The *Haram* might be considered the first protected "natural reservation" in the history of humanity. To emphasize the sanctity of the *Haram*, which is created by Divine order, the transgressors are punished:

"O you who believe, kill not game while you are on pilgrimage. And whoever among you kills it inten-

*"We believe in Allah
and in that which has been revealed to us,
and in that which was revealed to Abraham,
and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes,
and in that which was given to Moses and Jesus,
and in that which was given to the prophets
from their Lord,
we do not make any distinction between any of them
and to Him (Allah) do we submit."*

The Holy Qur'an, chapter 2, verse 136

Not only physical harm to animals is prohibited, but also insulting or cursing. An-Nawawi, in his famous compendium of Hadith, *Riyad as-Salihin*, narrated a hadith based on the report of `Imran Ibn Al-Hasin, who said:

"The Messenger of God was traveling once [with a group of companions which included] a woman from amongst the Ansar on a camel. [It seems that at one point driving her camel became difficult] she was annoyed, and cursed the camel! The Messenger of God heard her and said: 'Now that it is cursed, unload it and allow it [to roam free].'"^[11]

When an animal is proven to be a source of danger or harm, it is permitted to kill it. Al-Bukhari and Muslim narrated from the report of `A'ishah that the Prophet said:

"Five creatures, all harmful, can be killed in the *Haram* [Sanctuary of Makkah]: the crow, the kite, the scorpion, the mouse and the dog that bites [people without being provoked]".

This Hadith shows that the original position towards the *Haram*, the No-

tionally, the compensation thereof is the like of what he killed, from the cattle, as two just persons among you judge, as an offering to be brought to the Ka'bah, or the expiation thereof is the feeding of the poor or equivalent of it in fasting, that he may taste the unwholesome result of his deed. Allah pardons what happened in the past. And whoever returns (to it), Allah will punish him. "(Qur'an, 5:95)

3. Plants

Islam prohibited the cutting or destruction of trees and plants, and encouraged people to protect and increase plants for the great reward associated with that. Millions of trees are cut around the world each year to celebrate Christmas. I am sure that Jesus Christ would not have condoned that such acts are done in his name. Considering the environment, Alden Hinkely said that Christianity has the worst record. He also stated that Marx's call to "control" nature "echoes the teachings of the Bible".^[12]

For the sake of comparison, the following Hadith of the Prophet should prove to be useful:

"He who cuts a lote-tree [without justification], God will send him to

Hellfire.”^[13]

Against this background, where the life of one tree is appreciated, one can see what is the Islamic position towards destroying millions of trees as a result of humans directly acting upon nature (e.g. deforestation) or indirectly (e.g. acid rain).

Islam encourages people to plant trees and all useful plants. Indeed, similar to all acts performed in line within the Islamic world-view, and when done intentionally for the sake of God, they are considered

faith and cleanliness. Abu Hurayrah reported that the Prophet said:

“Beware of the two [acts that bring] curses: relieving oneself in the path of people or in the shade [i.e. where they usually rest].”^[17]

The same concept is reiterated in another Hadith which, in addition to the above two prohibitions, it mentions the prohibition of relieving oneself in water sources (e.g. ponds, rivers ...etc.).^[18]

keeping the environment clean. This position should be highlighted, because it challenges the authority to deliver sound policies regarding the environment and to implement them.

5. Water

In the harsh desert environment where the Prophet lived, water was synonymous to life. Water was a gift from God, the source of all life on earth, as is testified in the Qur’an: “We made from water every living thing” (21:30). The Qur’an constantly reminds believers that they are but the guardians of God’s creation on earth and that they should never take this creation for granted:

“See you the water which you drink? Do you bring it down from the clouds, or are We the Bringer? If We pleased, We could make it saltish; why give you not thanks?” (56:68-70)

“See you the water which you drink?
Do you bring it down from the clouds,
or are We the Bringer?
If We pleased, We could make it saltish;
why give you not thanks?”

The Holy Qur’an, chapter 56, verses 68-70

and rewarded as acts of worshipping. Jabir reported that the Prophet said:

“A Muslim, who plants a shoot, and anyone obtains the least thing from it, is considered [like paying] almsgiving on his behalf until the Day of Judgment.”^[14]

The Prophet explained that in terms of planting a palm-tree seedling, even if one realizes that it is the Day of Judgment and that the world is coming to an end,^[15] suggesting that even when all hope is lost for mankind, one should sustain nature’s growth. It is for this reason that is prohibited to let the land set idle for a long time without working it out.

4. Land

Protecting the land from pollution is indicated in the many Hadiths that encourage people to keep it clean. One Hadith states, among other things, that God likes goodness, cleanliness, and generosity. The Hadith ends with a request by the Prophet, asking Muslims to clean their courtyards.^[16]

The message is that cleanliness is something desirable, good and reflects an act of generosity towards the environment. Indeed, if cleanliness is something good, then it should be reflected everywhere.

Islam has created a bond between

The prohibition in these two Hadiths is intended to prevent pollution in the language of today. The direct human polluting activity at the time is extended to indirect sources of pollution, such as through sewers. The natural pollutants of the time are extended to include the chemical pollutants.

I would like to translate the language of the Hadith which prohibits the pollution of water into a contemporary context. We know already that chemicals such as pesticides, insecticides, herbicides...etc., are detrimental to the health of humans, and we know that much of these chemicals reach the aquifers. So, by analogy, this should be avoided. Scientists should come up with environment-friendly solutions.

The *Shari`ah* aims at protecting the environment, and while the individual is asked to help in this respect, the ultimate responsibility is in the hands of the state. When Abu Musa was sent to Al-Basrah as the new governor, he addressed the people saying:

“I was sent to you by `Umar Ibn Al-Khattab in order to teach you the Book of your Lord [i.e. the Qur’an], the *Sunnah*, and to clean your streets.”^[19]

The function of the governor who represents the authority includes

Furthermore, there are tens of verses in the Qur’an that reflect the direct involvement of the Divine Will, whenever it rains:

“And Allah sends down water from above, and therewith gives life to the earth after its death.” (Qur’an, 16:65; see also 30:24 and 50:9)

To protect water from pollution, the *Sunnah* emphasized the proper use of water without wasting it. One Hadith, among others, regarding the protection of water, is related to the use of clean still water. The Prophet said:

“No one should bathe in still water, when he is *junub* [i.e. either had intercourse or a wet dream].”^[20]

The Hadiths that directly focus on the proper use of water include the following:

The Prophet performed ablution three [times] and said: “Whoever increases [more than three] he does injustice and wrong.”^[21]

The Messenger of God performed ablution using one *mudd* [i.e. a measure equal to a handful of water].^[22]

Moreover, the Prophet took a shower using one *sa`* [four handfuls]. Imam Al-Ghazali said that to have a shower one should not keep pouring water, but should restrict

oneself to the amount needed.^[23]

6. Air

Protecting the air from pollutants can be deduced from the many Hadiths that, at the time of the Prophet, discouraged or prohibited activities that result in offensive smells and odors, from taking place in certain public places. We have already mentioned some of the Hadiths that prohibit the Muslims from relieving themselves near the rest place under a tree or near their paths. There are two associated harms with such behavior: offensive scenes and smells.

Another Hadith aims at protecting the Muslim community from offensive smells that result from eating garlic or onion. The Prophet said:

“He who eats from this tree - meaning garlic - should not get close to our mosque.”^[24]

Jabir reported the following:

“He who eats garlic or onion should stay away from us”, or he said: “should stay away from our mosque and stay at his home.”^[25]

The period which one should stay away from the mosque is limited to the duration of the smell.^[26]

Commenting on eating garlic and onion, and the harm they cause to others because of their smell, Dr. Yusuf Al-Qaradawi wrote:

“What should be prohibited in our times, without any doubt, is smoking [tobacco] for it harms people.^[27] These plants [onion and garlic] are originally lawful, yet smoking is harmful to the health, and to the economy. So, the appropriate ruling is to prohibit it...”^[28]

So Al-Qaradawi based his religious ruling upon the fact that smoking is

detrimental to the health of primary and secondary smokers. It is the harm that results from releasing anything harmful into the air, which forms the backbone of this fatwa. So anything that pollutes the air and

“And Allah sends down water from above, and therewith gives life to the earth after its death.”

The Holy Qur’an, chapter 16, verse 65

is detrimental to the health should be prohibited. This includes indirect harm, such as in the case of CFC, which depletes the ozone. Harmful fumes, that cannot be prohibited all together, should be reduced and alternatives should be made popular. The level of Carbon Monoxide would certainly be reduced if “solar” cars become popular!

7. Noise Pollution

Islam took care of the human being and made sure that he should not be subjected to loud and annoying noises to prevent harm to him, both physically and psychologically. The Hadith states that loud noise is foolish and harmful. In the Qur’an, Luqman advised his son, saying:

“And lower thy voice. Surely the most hateful of voices is braying of asses.” (31:19)

The Islamic *Shari’ah* does not allow loud voices in the mosques, even if it is the Qur’an that is recited. The right of the others to pray peacefully or to recite the Qur’an quietly on their own, during times other than the obligatory prayer which is performed together, should be respected.

Accordingly, other sources of noise pollution deserve the same judgment and should be avoided. It is already established that if one is subjected to excessive noise over a long period of time, it reduces the

person’s hearing ability and possibly psychosomatic illnesses.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper is a modest attempt to show that the Islamic world-view is indeed comprehensive and that it could adopt itself and live up to the new challenges that face humanity. Moreover, the Islamic position is considered a *via media* compared to the extreme positions regarding the environment.

To consider the protection of the environment as one of the major aims of the *Shari’ah* will hopefully enable the neo-model of Islamic civilization a chance to be advanced as an alternative to the existing western model, which is the primary source of pollution. Adopting this position makes it imperative for the Muslim governments (and organizations) to establish laws / regulations for the protection of the environment and implement them. We cannot afford to remain indifferent, or to think that environmental issues are alien to the Islamic world-view.

As we face the effects of pollution and overexploitation, desertification and water scarcity in some parts of the world and floods and violent storms elsewhere, it is perhaps time for the world community as a whole, Muslims, Christians, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, atheists and agnostics, to take a leaf out of the Prophet’s book and address the current environmental crisis seriously and wisely.

Prof. Mustafa Abu-Sway, Department of Philosophy, Al-Quds University, Jerusalem. Originally published on www.islam-online.net

A summary of this paper (in Dutch) was published by our Institute in the main daily newspaper of Suriname, *De Ware Tijd*, on April 19, 2003.

Endnotes

[1] “And kill not the soul which Allah has forbidden except for a just cause. And whoever is slain unjustly, We have indeed given to his heir authority – but let him not exceed the limit in slaying. Surely he will be helped.” (Qur’an, 17:33)

[2] “And kill not your people. Surely Allah is ever Merciful to

you.” (Qur’an, 4:29)

[3] See also Sayyid Sabiq, *Fiqh al-Sunnah*, vol. 2, pp. 477-79.

[4] The essential limits that should not be transgressed are best expressed by Abu Bakr, the first Caliph, in his address to Yazid Ibn Abu Sufian, the commander of the

army that went north to Sham [i.e. Greater Syria]: “...And I instruct you [to fulfill the following] ten [orders]: Do not kill a woman, nor a child, nor an old man; do not cut down fruitful trees; do not destroy [land or housing] in use; do not kill a goat or a camel unless for food; do not flood palm

trees [with water] nor burn them down ...” (Malik Ibn Anas, *al-Muwatta’*: narrated by Malik from the report of Yahya Ibn Sa’id in the chapter on Jihad # 918). Such a quotation, which reflects the ethos of the *Shari’ah*, defines the norm that the life of those who do not engage themselves directly in war should be

(Endnotes continued on page 8)

ANNUAL PRAYER CONGREGATION

December 2002, Lahore, Pakistan

Opening Speech by Hazrat Ameer Dr. Abdul Karim Saeed Pasha

(Note: This speech was published in *Paigham Sulh*, dated 1st –15th January 2003)

"In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

By the time! Surely man is in loss, except those who believe and do good, and exhort one another to Truth, and exhort one another to patience."

(The Holy Quran, 103:1-3)

My dear respected elders, brothers and sisters,

Assalamo alaikum wa Rahmatullah wa Barakatuh.

I dedicate this address to our respected elder Mr. Malik Saeed Ahmad and to young Nurullah Mohsin Saqib as well. Mr. Malik Saeed Ahmad is the person who, based on his visions, has been asking me continuously through correspondence to take the responsibility of leading the *Jama'at* but I had been reluctant to do so. The young Nurullah is the grandson of our esteemed Uncle Mr. Abdul Ghafur Saqib. The reason I am addressing him is that I envisage a day when this child will grow up and see the Ahmadiyya Movement free from the fetters of current legal and constitutional restrictions. And it will be then that Nurullah and other children like him will be able to grow up in a free atmosphere. I am also addressing the girls and ladies of the *Jama'at* who are bringing up our Ahmadiyya treasure. They should educate them properly and look after them with full care and attention. They should present the Ahmadiyya Movement to their offspring with conviction and with a sense of pride.

I have recited *surah al-Asr* before you. All of you know its translation and commentary very well. There are several meanings of the word *'asr* which include: age, time, day and night, the time for *'Asr* prayer and any moment in point of time. Recently while studying Hazrat Allama Hakim Maulana Nur-ud-Din's com-

mentary of the Quran, I found out that *'Asr* also means *essence*. Allah solemnly puts forward Islam as an essence of all the religions and also alluded to the phenomenon of the fleeting time. *'Asr* can include any span of time, ranging from centuries to a smallest fraction of a moment.

Allah always provides man with an opportunity to take a decision. And if he takes a wrong decision at a particular moment, he suffers gravely. I was also going to take a wrong decision and I am still wondering whether the decision I have made is a correct one. But it gives me great satisfaction when I see that this decision was not mine but of the General Council which has the trust and confidence of the whole *Jama'at*. If a single hand out of the fifty members had been raised against me, then I might have had an excuse that there are more able persons than me who should be given the chance. But that was the moment of *'Asr* as all the members present gave a unanimous decision in my favor and there was no hesitation at all in anyone's mind.

I thought that, may be, I would be rejected or would escape from assuming this responsibility if the request of relieving me was turned down by the employing authorities. But nothing happened. The officers concerned said that they would not like to become a hindrance. If Allah had decided it for you, then we are with you, they said. Before attending the General Council meeting, I had decided that if the members of the Council selected me, I would certainly leave my job even if I don't get a single penny as pension or any other benefits and that would not be a loss for me in any sense.

I did not take this decision for any monetary benefits. This deal is between myself and Allah. Hazrat Allama Maulana Hakim Nur-ud-Din had done the same deal and had not been wasted by Allah. The same was the case with Hazrat

Maulana Muhammad Ali, Hazrat Maulana Sadr-ud-Din, Hazrat Dr. Saeed Ahmad Khan, and Hazrat Dr. Asghar Hameed. That is why I have complete trust in Allah that He will never waste me. I need your cooperation and support. You are my strength. A single person can never do wonders alone.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him, was the Last prophet and the most perfect model for mankind. We firmly believe in the Finality of prophethood and that no prophet neither new or of old will come after him. This message should be conveyed to every one, that the Lahore *Jama'at* considers him as the Last prophet. The chain of *Mujaddids* (ordained Reformers) will continue. Elders of the *Jama'at* carried on the work of defending and propagating Islam entrusted to them by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Mujaddid* of the 14th century and Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam. They have fulfilled their responsibility with conviction, sincerity, wisdom and zeal. They are respected and remembered by us in the choicest words. These honorable personalities had not received religious education at any recognized theological institution. Instead they had obtained their knowledge and deep understanding of Islam through the grace of Allah and love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad. They had open minds and broad vision. Their hearts had been imbued with the spiritual insight blessed by Allah. I also pray to Allah to provide me with the essential knowledge so that I may be able to guide you to the best of my ability.

There are numerous varieties of plants in this world. Our *Jama'at* is one such blessed plant which had been planted by our *Imam* in accordance with the will of Allah. It will continue growing whether we do something for it or not. In my view, its growth resembles that of a Chinese bamboo tree. It is said that during its first year, the stem and roots of this tree grow at the same rate. During the second, third and fourth years, the

Towards an Islamic Jurisprudence ...

(Endnotes continued from page 7) spared. Protection is also extended to animals and plants; they should not be used as part of collective punishment.

[5] Muslim.

[6] Al-Nasa'i, 7/ 207; and Al-Hakim who stated that it has a sound chain of narrators. His statement was approved by Al-Munthiri and Al-Dhahabi.

[7] Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, *al-Sunnah Masdaran Lil-Ma'rifah wal-Hadarah*; pp. 145-146.

[8] Al-Bukhari and Muslim; Al-

Lu'lu' wal-Marjan, # 1279.

[9] Abu Dawud, # 2556.

[10] Abu Dawud, # 2548; Ahmad, 4: 180, 181; and Ibn Hibban, 545.

[11] Muslim, # 2595.

[12] Alden D. Hinckley, *Applied Ecology* (Macmillan: New York, 1976), pp. 317-318.

[13] Al-Tirmidhi, # 5239.

[14] Muslim.

[15] "When doomsday comes, if someone has a palm shoot

in his hand, he should plant it."

[16] Al-Tirmidhi, # 2799.

[17] Muslim, Ahmad, and Abu Dawud.

[18] Abu Dawud, Ibn Majah, Al-Hakim and Al-Bayhaqi.

[19] Al-Darimi, # 560.

[20] Muslim.

[21] Abu Dawud, Al-Nasa'i, and Ibn Majah.

[22] Al-Tirmidhi.

[23] Al-Ghazzali, *The Revival of Islamic Sciences*, vol. 1, p. 139.

[24] Al-Bukhari and Muslim,

Al-Lu'lu' wal-Marjan, # 331, 332.

[25] Ibid, # 333.

[26] This is understood from the Hadith of Al-Mughirah Ibn Shu'bah: "He who eats from this plant, should not get close to our mosque, until its smell goes." (Narrated by Ahmad, Abu Dawud and Ibn Hibban)

[27] See also Qur'an, 2:195: "Cast not yourselves to perdition with your own hands and do good (to others). Surely Allah loves the doers of good."

[28] Al-Qaradawi, op. cit., p. 286

roots go on growing deeper and deeper, but the stem remains at the same height. Then at the 5th year the stem suddenly attains an astonishing height of 80 feet. I hope this plant of the Ahmadiyya Movement which apparently looks small now, due to adverse circumstances, will grow like the Chinese bamboo tree in the not far distant future. What is required is your full cooperation and devotion. To express to you my feelings of responsibility regarding the leadership that you have bestowed upon me, and my state of seeking of help from Allah, I would like to quote some verses of poetry of the Promised Messiah:

“O Allah help me now with Your blessings

So that the ship of Islam may survive this violent storm.

Overlook my weaknesses and shortcomings

So that the enemy who is accursed may not be happy over this state.

O Allah! Shower Your blessings on Islam and come to its rescue Yourself,

Hear the supplications of servants on this wrecked ship.

It is You alone, my Beloved, Who can do something about it

Otherwise the tribulation is increasing day by day.

This cool breeze has started blowing now after a long time

Who knows when this will blow again and spring come.

Weak are we, O Allah, lift us up with Your hands

Feeble are we, so remove all the burden from us.”

(Foreword in Urdu to the Arabic book, *I'jaz al-Masih*, 20th Feb. 1901)

Allah has Himself laid down the foundation of this Movement. Communities are ready to join its ranks. These people will be with you soon. The good news may come from U.S.A., from Egypt, the Middle East and from other parts of the world. You will see that people in great numbers are ready to join us as it has been destined by Allah. Nothing is impossible for Him.

Listen to how the Promised Messiah fervently prays for the devoted members of the *Jama'at*:

“May Allah be with every devotee who bears hardship for undertaking a journey to join this annual spiritual gathering. May Allah bless him with great rewards and blessings, and have mercy on him. May the Beneficent Allah solve his problems and remove his difficulties. May Allah guard him from sorrows and cure his illnesses and fulfil his noble wishes. Such a person on the Day of Judgment will be among persons who shall be blessed and rewarded. O Merciful and Gracious Allah, accept our submissions and grant us resounding dominance over the opponents with clear signs as it is You alone Who has the authority to bestow every honor and ability.”

As far as my personal background is concerned, I am not a student of religion. I am a doctor by profession. When I applied for admission, only holders of at least second division could apply. I had hardly managed to secure this minimum required standard as I had spent most of my time in activities like body building, drama, college elections etc. Therefore the outcome was not against expectations. I could have missed my admission in case I had secured even one number short of second division; or if I had not been the son of a doctor as I got my admission on seats reserved for doctors' children.

I started off my medical studies in this manner. However at that moment, I did make a firm commitment to myself to work hard. And by dint of this commitment, I graduated from Medical College, became a professor, was made head of my Department, and obtained a degree of higher studies of MRCP from the United Kingdom and was also conferred honorary fellowship of College of Physicians, London and College of Physicians and Surgeons, Pakistan. I also became Examiner of post graduate examinations in Pakistan and abroad. I was also selected as principal of my College but could not continue the post because of my affiliation to the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement.

You can see how Allah has been kind to me in various ways and bestowed upon me His mercies and blessings. Though I had to face hardships being an Ahmadi, yet Allah specially blessed me with patience and firmness. I can compare my present appointment with my admission to the medical college and hope to shoulder the heavy responsibility put upon me by the General Council. I promise that I will try to succeed in obtaining 'fellowship' for the *Jama'at* as well with the same commitment and hard work which I had made at the start of my medical career. Your prayers and active cooperation will surely help me in discharging my responsibilities to the best of my ability.

Many people had asked me to become *Amir* of the *Jama'at* but I refused as I loved my profession, and worldly allurements and prospects of promotions in this profession and a bright future ahead. I had my professorship, chances of obtaining a high post in international organizations such as the World Health Organization and also chances of obtaining high grades and various other lucrative distinctions and privileges. These were the hurdles in the way of my decision. But when I prayed to Allah for guidance and steadfastness during the blessed nights of the month of *Ramadan*, I saw a dream in which I saw myself sitting on a huge rock which was rocking violently and it was becoming difficult for me to keep myself steady on it. In the meanwhile a person approached me from a distance. I thought that he would also request me to become *Amir*. He asked me angrily as to why I propose others to take the responsibility and do not take it myself. Some other persons followed him and kept on getting on to the rock and suddenly the shaking rock became steady. Then (during the same dream)

I related to the people accompanying me a childhood story of a shepherd who took all wise and correct decisions while sitting on a specific rock but the moment he stepped down from it he became like an ordinary shepherd. Then I recited the opening words of verse 26 of chapter 3 — “O Allah, Owner of the Kingdom, Thou givest the kingdom to whom Thou pleasest.” At this point I started weeping profusely. Before I could complete the recitation of the verse, I woke up and completed the remaining part of the verse.

When I consulted persons having knowledge about dreams and their interpretation, it was revealed that rock symbolizes a nation or a movement, and sitting on it signifies to hold an important post. The person narrating a story to others indicates that he is likely to get some sort of leadership. The one who recites this particular verse in a dream, he shall be rewarded with the blessings promised in it. So in a way it was a directive given to me that I should accept the responsibility and consequently the state of weakness in my mind had gone away and it provided courage to accept the challenge. Next morning when I woke up, I changed my earlier decision of not accepting the responsibility and here I am standing before you just because of that heavenly guidance given to me through that dream. I request all of you to remember me in your daily prayers, and to have faith that the above prayer really refers to the entire *Jama'at*. I asked a pious lady who observed *Itikaaf* during the last ten days of *Ramadan*, for whom did she pray most during those blessed days? She replied that she prayed most for me as I had become the *Amir* of the *Jama'at*. I hope and am confident that all of you will pray for me like she did.

As a teacher I know that first an objective is determined, then a plan is prepared to achieve it. And then adequate resources and competent persons to implement the plan are selected. The objectives of our Movement have already been outlined by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, in his books, speeches and exhortations and he has impressed upon his followers with full conviction, strong arguments and prophecies that the propagation and preaching of true Islam is our first and foremost objective. Another important objective is to inculcate deep love and devotion for Allah in our daily prayers and to live a life in complete accord with the *Sunna* of the Holy Prophet. We should set a noble example for others. Every individual and each *Jama'at* should be a source of inspiration for others in conveying the message of the Ahmadiyya Movement. Therefore there is a great need that we should pay special attention towards reforming our own selves and consolidating the *Jama'at* and putting into action plans for its welfare.

Once we have determined our objectives, the next step is to prepare a viable strategy. In educational language, it is known as Instructional Strategy. All the *Jama'ats* both inside and outside of Pakistan will be part of this strategy. We will assess their needs and problems and will

try to plan according to the means available. We should consider the Central *Anjuman* as the Master gland which provides nourishment and strength to smaller glands in the body to keep the body working and in healthy condition to undertake and accomplish future plans in life. The current situation must be evaluated afresh so that deficiencies in attaining our objectives may be taken note of and steps are taken to remove them.

The task of planning and gathering information has become easier these days through computers and the Internet. During the last one month, I have received numerous e-mails from various *Jama'ats* and individuals from all over the world. I could not have managed to attend to them all. My youngest son helped me by reading them out to me every morning and replied to them according to my instructions, for which I am thankful to him. In this way my contact has been established with *Jama'ats* in South Africa, Fiji, Indonesia, New Zealand, U.S.A., Canada, U.K., Australia, Holland, Trinidad, Guyana, Suriname etc.

On the eve of *Eid al-Fitr*, I dispatched greetings to all the *Jama'ats* through the Internet. A number of people replied to my greetings and some even sent their suggestions and also asked for help. For instance, the Auckland *Jama'at* in New Zealand requested for help to make arrangements for *Dars-i Quran* and that they are waiting for Bro. Shaukat Ali of Bangkok to come and do something about it. I suggested to them that instead of waiting for Bro. Shaukat Ali, some people should volunteer to do it themselves. They should study the English translation of the Holy Quran by Maulana Muhammad Ali, commentary of part 30 of the Quran by Dr. Basharat Ahmad and *Dars-i Quran* by Mr. Naseer Ahmad Faruqi which have now been translated into English, and give *Dars* based on these sources. We will help in this connection as well.

These days knowledge and information on different subjects are available on the Internet. All our important books, booklets and articles both in English and Urdu are available on our two websites run by the A.A.I.L. of U.S.A. (www.muslim.org) and the Holland *Jama'at* (www.aaill.org). They keep on adding material and information with regularity. These sources should be made use of. Computers are now available in most of our homes. So I will request parents to spend at least 15 to 20 minutes of their time everyday at the computer with their children and take advantage of the on-going material available at these websites. In this way they will be able to keep themselves and their children abreast of matters relating to Islam and the Ahmadiyya Movement.

More attention is also needed towards imparting religious education to our women and children and also to bring closer ties between members of the *Jama'at* through marriage and other social activities. The initial work has been started in this regard. A proforma has been issued which will collect the following data of each person and members of the fam-

ily: name, age, education, status of service and other details. I request all of you who are present here to please fill this form and hand it over to the office. Similarly all members living throughout Pakistan should make it a point to fill the form and send it to the Central office in Lahore. We will try our best to tabulate all the data thus collected and chalk out plans accordingly.

Another important task is to computerize all the Arabic, Urdu and English books available in the *Salihah Zahur Ahmad Memorial Library* of the Central *Anjuman* in Darus Salaam. The treasure of knowledge lying in this Library can be made available not only to our members here but also in other cities and countries. The present librarian, our worthy elder Qazi Abdul Ahad, has a computer-like brain and he knows all the books and their details. He helps people with his knowledge. All this information needs to be put into the computer so that whenever anyone anywhere in the world requires a reference we can supply it to them through the Internet in a very short time. Though most of our important publications are already on the website, yet there are still many books not scanned so far, which we can supply to people by photocopy.

I have deputed some young men to prepare a list of frequently asked questions and objections about the Ahmadiyya Movement. Detailed answers with references, when prepared, will be made available on the website as well.

Similarly, there is a great need to develop close contact and frequent communication with members of the *Jama'at* within Pakistan and abroad. This year two of my sons are in the U.K. for higher studies. We remember them every day and wish to contact them through the phone or the Internet or to know about their welfare through some letter or otherwise. Why don't we have similar concern and anxiety for our Ahmadi brothers and sisters scattered throughout the world, that we should be in touch with them, and be thinking about how we can help them? Similarly, they should also be anxious to keep in touch with us, to know of our plans and to help us in them. We should seriously think about this and adopt immediate steps to develop close contact through frequent communications.

We should establish our identity as Ahmadi and should feel pride that we have recognized the *Imam* of the age who had been prophesied by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him. It gave me great satisfaction when I saw our youth taking active part in the Annual Prayer Congregation. We should utilize fully their capabilities and zeal for the Movement.

We should make special efforts for organising *Dars-i Quran*, the five daily prayers and religious instruction and education in all *Jama'ats*. Today the mosque was full at the *Fajr* prayer which is a commendable thing. In future if we see rows even outside the main hall, then that would be a sign of progress. Similar progress

should be visible in all aspects of the activities of the *Jama'at*. Mere tall talk or written reports are not enough, some concrete results must be visible. We must see progress with our own eyes. This will give encouragement to the members and workers of the *Jama'at* to go forward even further.

At the start of my speech I had mentioned Malik Saeed Ahmad sahib by name. We should pay due respect to such pious personalities who through devotion and sincere prayers have attained close relationship with Allah. I had met him last year at this very place and had asked him how to attain nearness to Allah. In reply Malik sahib had told me to stick to *Tahajjud* prayers and repeat the *Darud Sharif* in them. I followed his advice all year and saw the results in my life. His advice benefited me very greatly and I hope I will find its blessings in the next life as well.

Now I am going to relate another dream of mine, although I do not like relating my dreams to others. However, sometimes it is useful to do so when it concerns others. In my dream I saw that I am sitting in a beautiful, bright, well-decorated office in Darus Salaam Colony. A number of beautiful evergreen plants are placed all around it, which are of different sizes. Some are big, some average and the remaining are very small. I am watering these plants with a big pot and saying to myself: How cruel are people who do not fear Allah and want to see these plants die which have been planted by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him. Among the plants I saw some very tiny plants and I was afraid even to sprinkle water over them lest I damage them. Then during my dream I thought that I should consult my wife, who is fond of plants and has experience of looking after them, as to how to take care of these small plants so as not to damage them. This means there is need to nurture the young and we need the whole family especially women to make an effort to save these small saplings from withering away.

The point is that among the followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him, there are some people of strong faith, some have average faith, while the remaining are weak. Among them are also youths and children who will grow in their faith and will in future serve the cause of Islam with greater zeal and devotion. We should plan for their spiritual training. We should also spend all our resources on their proper upbringing in every respect. We will have to save these plants of the Holy Prophet Muhammad from the unrighteous, anti-faith powers who want these plants to wither.



1st May – Labour Day

LABOUR IN BALANCE

Islam aims at creating a society in which peace and prosperity prevail among the citizens. This includes material progress, and for this purpose God has provided mankind with the natural resources of the earth.^[1]

ASCETICISM

An ideal society includes a flourishing economy and for this reason Islam encourages labour. However, it is possible that people get so involved in labour that they lose sight of the spiritual side of life. As a result, many unlawful and irresponsible means (corruption, gambling, etc.) might be used to earn as much money as possible, without hesitation.

To avoid this situation, some groups within various religions (including Islam) went to the extreme and established the institution of Asceticism. The thought behind this is that people who seclude themselves from the temptations of the world, such as wealth and sex, will automatically achieve a pure, spiritual life.

This, however, is not the view of Islam. The Qur'an states that God has established times for working and for rest.^[2] Man can only develop his moral self when he is exposed to the attractive and tempting things of life. He can

make spiritual progress by making efforts to restrain these temptations. Thus, Islam aims at finding a middle course and for this reason the Qur'an teaches the believers to pray for the good, both of this world and of the Hereafter.^[3] Asceticism is not an Islamic institution, therefore, the Qur'an mentions it as being "an invention of man".^[4]

SPENDING PROPERTY

Labour and the collection of wealth are not only necessary for the progress of society, but they play an important role for the individual, too. The Qur'an mentions property as being "a means to support".^[5] This support is not only for one's household, but, in fact, for every poor and needy fellow-man. Islam does not consider property to be the possession of an individual – even if he has earned it with his own hands – but property is considered as the possession of God, which has been entrusted to the people. For this reason, the Qur'an describes the true believer as one who "spends of what God has given him".^[6] By spending his property on his fellow-men, he tries to lessen their sorrow, he develops a feeling of compassion for them, and he learns that wealth is not everything in life. This last point is very important, for, as was mentioned earlier, the desire for more

and more wealth can drive one to unlawful and irresponsible means to achieve it.

ALWAYS A PLACE FOR GOD

Labour and wealth are only a means to achieve certain goals and not the ultimate goals of life. One can earn as much money as one likes, there is no restriction on this, except that extravagance should be avoided,^[7] for even if the roofs and stairs of his house are from silver and gold, as the Qur'an states, the Hereafter will be only for the dutiful believers.^[8] The Qur'an describes these believers as "men whom neither merchandise nor selling diverts from remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of prayer and the paying of the poor-rate" (24:37).

So even if you are busy earning money, God desires that you always have a place for Him in your heart and that you spend part of your property on your poorer brethren. Only in this way can a flourishing, peaceful society exist, which consists of righteous and pious people who earn and spend their property in a sound way.

Qur'an references: [1] 31:20, 2:30; [2] 78:10-11; [3] 2:201; [4] 57:27; [5] 4:5; [6] 2:3; [7] 5:87-88, 7:31-32; [8] 43:33-35

A Dutch version of this article was published by our Institute in the main daily newspaper of Suriname, *De Ware Tijd*.

URDU, A CULTURAL HERITAGE OF INDIA

Because of its multi-ethnic population, Suriname has become a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-lingual community in fact a miniature united nation. While each ethnic group still speaks the language of the country it originated from, the lingua franca in Suriname called "Sranang Tongo", which is spoken by all, is composed of several local languages, the root being English.

When the Dutch took over Suriname from the British, they began bringing in laborers from neighboring countries like Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana etc. from 1843, in addition to the African slaves that were already working on the plantations.

However, with slavery being abolished in our country in 1863 and the demand for new hands for plantation labor increased as a result, the Government allowed the immigration of the British-Indian laborers in Suriname and with them their culture, language, knowledge

and traditions entered Suriname. The first group arrived in Suriname on June 4th after a three month non-stop sea voyage and set foot on our soil the following day, namely June 5th. When the sailing ship Lalla Rookh arrived, of the circa 399 British-Indian immigrants on-board, about 20% was Muslim.

The Muslim community spoke more colloquial Urdu than Hindi or Awadhi mixed, while the Hindus spoke Hindi, Awadhi mixed, Bhojpuri, etc.

ORIGIN OF URDU-LANGUAGE

Urdu is the youngest language of India, but it is not a provincial language like Tamil, Marathi, Bengali, etc. It is scattered all over India and spoken beyond India too, like in Pakistan, Suriname, Fiji, Mauritius, etc. It is not indigenous to Pakistan as some may think.

Urdu is an Indo-Aryan language, originating in

the region between the Ganges and Jamuna rivers near Delhi, and is now one of the official languages of Pakistan, cultivated by the Muslims. As a spoken language Urdu derives from Hindustani, the lingua franca of Northern India before the partition in 1947.

Urdu is a Turkish word, which means 'army' (lashkar), 'groups' or 'market'. Its origin is an amalgamation of foreigners with natives of South Asia, formulated also by the interaction between Moghuls, Pathans, Turkish, Afghans, etc., working in the Royal army of India, and merchants and immigrants to India. These foreigners could not speak their pure Arabic, Parsi or Turkish in the markets of their encampment, because the local people could not understand these languages and they too did not know the local spoken language. So they began to adjust their language with the local language. It became a kind of a colloquial language. And this was later called Urdu.

The word "Urdu" is not ancient. Before the period of Badshah Shahjahan it was called Hindi, Hindwi, Rekhta, Dakini, etc. Urdu is very similar to

Hindi, an official language of India. Although the two languages have a common base, in its literary form Urdu emphasizes words of Persian and Arabic origin, whereas Hindi emphasizes words of Sanskrit origin. Urdu is written in a modified version of the Persian script (written from right to left), whereas Hindi is written in Devnagri script from left to right. The grammar of Urdu is quite similar to Hindi, because it is pre-eminently the language of the educated Muslims of Northern India, including the Punjab. Urdu has strong associations with Muslim nationalism; hence the ideological significance of Urdu in Pakistani politics.

In fact Urdu is not a language of any one nation or religion. It is a language of the common people and a symbol of fraternity. Urdu is like a beloved daughter-in-law of Persia. Even though married however, she settled in her maternal house, the Indian subcontinent. Her garment and charm are to be Persian, but heart and soul are purely Indian. Urdu is indeed lovely and sweet.

THE FUTURE OF URDU IN SURINAME

The very first Muslim immigrants to arrive in Suriname were completely free to practice their religion, culture and language and they did so freely at home and in small mosques. Although after arrival they were employed in different districts (parts) of the country, fellow Muslims had always striven intensively for mutual contact in religious and cultural matters by means of Urdu language. As the districts were isolated from the city, the Muslims have been able to conserve most of their own cultural and religious norms brought in from India. Very simple Masjids (prayer-houses) were constructed to enable the Muslims to practice their faith. Urdu was one of the important cultural means from India to the Muslims at that time to understand the religion, because all the religious books were written in Urdu and Arabic.

The first and most prominent persons and scholars in Urdu language born in India, who did their best to educate their fellow-Muslims here, were: Ahmad Khan, also known as Hafiji, Munshi Rahman Khan and Shekh Ahmadali. Moulvi Shekh Ahmadali was the first to start classes (madarsa) where Urdu lessons were given and literature was available. Some teachers gave Urdu lessons to individual students. Some years later the descendants of the immigrants, like Sardar Karamat Ali, Kallay Khan, Abdoelhafiez Khan and others, carried on this work.

A madarsa was always attached to the mosque, where Urdu and Arabic lessons were given, together with reciting of the Holy Qur'an and also teachings of basic principles of Islam. Next to that, all kinds of cultural and social activities were also taking place.

In 1938 the first monthly magazine in Urdu language, 'Hakikatul Islam', published by Moulvi Shekh Ahmadali, appeared to strengthen the relation among the Muslim communities. Another well-known Urdu

magazine was 'Juma Akhbar', published by the "Surinaamse Islamitische Vereniging" (SIV). Radio-programs in Urdu were started by Noer Pierkhan. Singers used Urdu in Quawali band, Baithak Gana etc. (making music and singing, while sitting). At present, Urdu and Dutch are spoken at weddings, birthday ceremonies, etc.

Regrettably, at present there are neither qualified Urdu teachers nor Urdu libraries, and there is hardly any Urdu literature available.

Urdu religious books are already translated into English and Dutch, so the need for Urdu books to understand and practice this language is not there any more. As a result, the majority of our youth can hardly speak or understand Urdu and communicates in Dutch. If this trend continues, I am afraid our youth might lose interest to learn Urdu. At present only a few madarsas give Urdu lessons. At religious and social activities, both Urdu and Dutch are being spoken, Urdu mostly by elder persons. More and more the spoken Urdu here is being mixed with borrowed Dutch and English words, just like our Hindi is mixed with Dutch and English words in conversations.

This is sometimes very funny to listen to! But it is very important to do our utmost to preserve real Hindi and real Urdu in our country. There are institutions teaching Hindi as you already know, but unfortunately this is not the case with Urdu, for we do not have at our disposal a qualified Urdu-teacher to preserve and consolidate the Urdu language here.

So, if we do not make all efforts to promote and cultivate Urdu in our country, this cultural heritage from India will vanish as it has disappeared in Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica etc., where speaking the English language was mandatory upon the immigrants, which arrived from India.

While I was in India attending the Bharatiya Prawasi Divas, I found in my Conference-map an information sheet of the National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language, the NCPUL. The NCPUL stands for National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language. I was very happy to read about the efforts they make to promote, develop and propagate the Urdu language.

The NCPUL started its academic and administrative operations with effect from January 4th 1996 during the IX Plan. NCPUL was declared as the National Nodal Agency for promotion of Urdu in the country. Some of the goals of the Council are:

- To take action for making available in Urdu-language, the knowledge of scientific and technological development as well as knowledge of ideas evolved in the modern context.
- To advise the government of India on issues connected with Urdu language and having bearing on education as may be referred to it.
- To undertake any other activity for the promotion of Urdu language as may be

deemed fit by the Council.

NCPUL provides part-time Urdu teachers to various non-governmental organizations for promotion of Urdu education. The scheme includes financial support to voluntary organizations for other selected Urdu promotional activities, as also assistance to publication of manuscripts and bulk purchase of books.

Next to establishing Computerized Calligraphy and Graphic Training Centres in many States and districts of India, NCPUL is the principal publication house in Urdu of the Government of India.

Their most important activity is making available authentic text of classics, produced during the last 300 years of evolution of Urdu poetry and prose. NCPUL also publishes 'Urdu Duniya', a monthly magazine, and a quarterly, named 'Fikro-Tehqeeq', a prestigious research journal.

The Council also provides financial assistance to small and medium Urdu newspapers for availing Urdu service of the United News of India (UNI). They promote Arabic and Persian also for their legacy contributed to the enrichment of Indian composite culture.

In order to popularize the Urdu language and its script, the Council has launched a six-month 'Certificate Course of Urdu Script' through Hindi and English medium for those who know Devnagri or Roman script and wish to learn Urdu script. This course received an overwhelming response throughout the country from people of all walks of life and social status.

As I have quoted for you from this information sheet, the NCPUL is doing wonderful work to promote and preserve the beautiful Urdu language in India.

My request to the 7th World Hindi Conference is to make all efforts to get the support from NCPUL to help promote, consolidate and conserve also the beautiful Urdu language in our country Suriname. This object is very easy to achieve in our world of globalization and information technology, IT.

I also strongly support the efforts of the Seventh World Hindi Conference to make Hindi, a language spoken by millions in the world, an official language at the United Nations.

This Paper has been presented by dr K. Ghafoerkhan during the 7th World Hindi Conference in Suriname (5-9 June 2003).

