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ISLAM IS MODERN

THAT ISLAM IS MODERN AND AS SUCH MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE MODERN AGE, IS SHOWN IN THIS TREATISE.

I propose to give first a synopsis of the doctrines of Islam, and then to offer a detailed discussion thereon, which will primarily and principally be supported by the texts of the Holy Quran, and by the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet.

The Synopsis:

Unity of God

I. God, as described in the Quran, is the Lord of the entire universe in general, and of all the nations of the world in particular. Accordingly, His dispensations, physical as well as spiritual, are provided uniformly for all the peoples.

Unity of Humanity

II. Islam teaches that the whole mankind is but one nation, the common factor among them being human nature, which is just the same all the world over. Differences of race and religion, as well as those of colour and language, being only superficial, do not affect the inner nature of humanity. Islamic brotherhood is universal; it knows no restrictions. The king and the peasant are governed by the self-
same laws; there being no prerogatives for a Muslim king. That 'the king can do no wrong' is repugnant to Islamic democracy. He must be punished if he goes wrong.

**Law of Salvation**

III. The attainment of eternal bliss and happiness, according to Islam, does not depend on belief in any dogma, or observance of any ritual. It depends rather upon a real and sincere belief in the existence of God, and upon a conscientious and honest way of living.

IV. Islam confirms the truth of all the revealed books, and enjoins belief in all the Prophets of the world, with a view to unifying the followers of all the religions.

V. Universalism is a very striking characteristic of Islamic teachings.

VI. Islam urges that all peoples of the world should come together on a common platform — all believing in the Unity of God, and in the truth of all the revealed books, and holding in high esteem and respect all the Prophets raised among the various peoples.

**Dignity of Man**

VII. Islam enjoins that we should have respect for the dignity of man. In man are reflected some of the noblest and finest of Divine attributes. Man is endowed with reason, volition and conscience, which
constitute the most adequate equipment to guide him aright, to make him live a successful and happy life, and to enable him to contribute to the happiness of his fellow-beings. Man, as such, is entitled to our respect.

VIII. No caste or class is to be denounced, and no manner of segregation is imposed on any class. According to Islam, there are no gentiles, and no shudras. All mankind is regarded as pure. Inter-dining and inter-marrying are declared lawful.

The form of Government

IX. Islam established a real democratic form of government. The rulers were elected by the people, and were held answerable to the people. Islam inculcates freedom of conscience, encourages freedom of opinion, freedom of expression, and protects economic freedom.

Non-Muslim subjects

X. Islam lays down clear-cut rules for the treatment of non-Muslim subjects. They are free to follow their own religion, and to live their own mode of life. Their property, their life, and their honour shall be protected. They shall be ruled by the self-same laws as are applicable to the Muslim subjects.

XI. Islam urges that promises, pacts, and covenants must be kept and fulfilled.

XII. Islam recognises and maintains the rights
the poor. They have a rightful share in the State Treasury.

XIII. The priestly class and the affluent people, that are given to hoarding wealth, and who exercise a baneful influence on the liberty and general well-being of the people, have been strongly denounced; the priestly class being abolished altogether.
DESCRIPTION AND DISCUSSION OF
THE ISLAMIC IDEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES OF ISLAM

I. Unity and Universality of God

That God is the Creator and Sustainer of the entire universe and of all the nations, is outlined in the following texts of the Holy Quran:

(a) “All praise is due to God Who is the Creator and Sustainer of all the worlds and all the nations” (1:1). This is how the Quran opens, and how it makes a statement regarding the Creator, mentioning the entire universe to be His creation, of which He is the Lord and the Sustainer. Such a statement deserves to be called a scientific statement in the real sense, for it comprehends the entire creation as well as the Creator, leaving out nothing.

(b) “Our Lord is He Who gave everything its creation, then guided it to its goal” (20:50).

(c) “God is the Creator of everything, and He has charge over everything” (39:62).

(d) “He causes the night to cover the day, and causes the day to cover the night; and He governs the sun and the moon: each follows its course to an appointed time; this is
God, your Lord; to Him alone belongs the kingdom; and those whom you call upon besides Him, do not control a straw”

(35:13).

(e) “He created the heavens and the earth with truth, and He gave you a shape, and made your shapes fine; and to Him is the ultimate returning. He knows as Creator what is in the heavens and the earth, and He knows what you do in hiding and what you do openly; God is Cognizant of what is in the hearts” (64:3, 4).

(f) “Do you not see that God is He Whom obeys whoever is in the heavens, and whoever is in the earth, and the sun and the moon and the stars, and the mountains and the trees, and the animals, and many among mankind” (22:18).

(g) “Wonderful Originator of the heavens and the earth! How could He have a son when He has no consort, and He Himself created everything, and He is Knower of all things. This is God, your Lord. There is no God but He, the Creator of all things, therefore serve Him for He has charge of all things” (6:102, 103).

(h) “Surely your Lord is God, Who created the heavens and the earth in six periods of times, and on that account He sits on the throne of government; He throws the veil
of the night over the day, which it pursues incessantly; and He created the sun and the moon and the stars; He made them submissive to His command; surely His is the creation and His is the command; Glorified is God, the Lord of the worlds’’ (7:54).

(i) “God is He Who created the heavens and the earth, and sent down water from the clouds, then brought forth with it fruits as a sustenance for you, and He has made the ships subservient to you, that they might run in the sea by His command, and He has made the rivers subservient to you. And He has made subservient to you the sun and the moon pursuing their courses, and He has made subservient to you the night and the day. And He has provided you with every thing you could ask for; and if you enumerate God’s favours, you could not number them; most surely man is unjust and ungrateful” (14:32, 33, 34).

(j) “God is He Who made for you the night that you may rest therein, and the day to see; most surely God is Gracious to mankind, but most men do not give thanks. This is God, your Lord, the Creator of everything; there is no God but He, wherefore are you turned away?”
“God is He Who made the earth a resting place and the heaven a canopy, and He gave you a shape, a fine shape He has given you, and He provided you with good things; This is God, your Lord : Glorified therefore is God, the Lord of the worlds” (40 : 61, 62, 64).

“...And one of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your tongues and colours; most surely there are signs in this for the learned” (30 : 22).

(k) “Announce: to God belong the East and the West” (2 : 142).

“To God belong the East and the West, to whichever side you turn your faces in prayers, God will be there” (2 : 115).

“Lord of the East and the West, there is no God but He, therefore take Him for a Protector” (73 : 9).

(l) “Do you argue with us (as to God being regional or racial) while He is our Lord and your Lord; and we shall have fruits of our good deeds, and you will have the fruits of your good deeds, and we are sincere in the sight of God” (2 : 139).

These texts are illustrative of the fact that God, according to the Quran, is universal and His grace extends to all mankind without any discrimination.
II. Unification of Mankind

The unity and universality of God, as described above, aims at bringing about the unification of the entire mankind. This realisation of great moment depends upon a strong faith in the unity of God, which has been very much emphasized in the Quran. When we come to realise that every nation is the creation of the self-same God, and every nation is being looked after by the self-same God, we will then look upon all mankind as God's big family. There have, however, arisen in God's family mistaken views and prejudices, which keep its members apart. These prejudices must be eliminated in order to bring peace and happiness to this family. Accordingly the Quran describes and discusses prejudices born of fanatical and religious views, prejudices that owe their origin to notions of racial superiority, and prejudices for which differences of colour and language are responsible.

TEXTS THAT DEAL WITH PROBLEMS JUST MENTIONED

(a) "All peoples are a single nation" (2:213).

(b) "And all peoples are naught but a single nation."

(c) "O people, fear God, your Lord, Who created you from a single being, and created its mate of the same kind, and spread from these two, many men and women, and fear
God, by Whom you demand one of another your rights, and be mindful of the ties of relationship; surely God ever watches you”

(4:1).

The Prophet of Islam made the following comment on this text:

“Listen: Verily your Lord is one, Listen: Verily your father is one; O people of God, become brethren.”

(d) “O people! surely We have created you of a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may distinguish one another; but the most honourable among you with God are surely the most Godfearing of you; surely God is Knowing, Aware”

(49:13).

The Prophet of Islam made comments on the above text on the occasion of his Last Pilgrimage at Mecca. He addressed the assemblage as follows:

“No Arab has superiority over any non-Arab, and no non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; no dark person has any superiority over a white person, and no white person has any superiority over a dark person. The criterion of honour in the sight of God is righteousness and honest living.”

God being Universal, His law of honour is also universal and uniform. The most honourable among
mankind are those who are Godfearing and whose living is righteous and honest. Obviously this law is of universal application, and is therefore acceptable to all. This law is designed to eliminate false and injurious conceptions of racial superiority.

(e) "O believers! Let not one nation laugh at another nation, perchance they may be better than they; nor let women laugh at others, perchance they may be better than they" (49:11).

(f) "And let not enmity of a people, because they hindered you from the sacred Mosque, incite you to exceed the limits; co-operate with one another in the cause of goodness and righteousness, and do not co-operate with one another in sin and aggression; entertain fear of God, surely God is Severe in requiting evil" (5:2).

(g) "O believing Muslims! Be upright for God and maintain justice, be bearers of witness with justice, and let not enmity of a nation incite you not to act equitably; act with fairness and justice, that is nearer to righteousness; entertain fear of God, surely God is Aware of what you do" (5:8).

It has been mentioned in the previous pages that God is Lord of the East and the West, and that the diversity of languages and colours forms one of His
signs. In all cases and under all circumstances, human nature continues to be the same” (30 : 30).

III. Law of Salvation

The word salvation is repugnant to the Islamic ideology. Salvation means to rescue a person who has fallen into an abyss. But Islam repudiates the notion of original sin. According to Islam, man is the proudest handiwork of God, Who has conferred upon him the best of shape, and equipped him with intellect, volition, and conscience, in order to guide him aright. There are good people among every nation, who have displayed exemplary character with regard to self-sacrifice for their religion, for their country, and for their nation. That shows that man is not fallen into the abyss of sin. Man does not therefore require to be rescued. Islam, on the contrary, lays stress on the fructification of the nascent capabilities of man, and such a fruition is destined to bring happiness to him. It is a fact known to everybody that physical development results in happiness, and intellectual advancement is accompanied by a much higher satisfaction and pleasure. Moral development which inspires a person to sacrifice everything for the welfare and uplift of humanity is a source of the greatest happiness and highest satisfaction. Islam tells us that you will attain to blissful state of mind, when you do your best to perform your duty to God, and your duty to man. One should expend one’s money, attention and
sympathy for the welfare of God's creatures in order to earn everlasting happiness.

Man should also try to widen the circle of his sympathies still further. He can reach the remotest corner of this globe by believing that all mankind is a big family of God, and that all religious teachers of mankind must be respected. By so doing, he would knit the ties of brotherhood closer and stronger.

That the above-mentioned qualities are required of the Muslims, is outlined on the very first page of the Holy Quran. It reads:

“In the name of God, the most Beneficent, the most Merciful.

1. I am God, the Knower. This Book, there is no doubt in it, is a guide for those who are God-fearing.

2. Those who believe in God even when they are not watched.

3. Who keep up prayer, and spend for humanity out of what We have provided them.

4. And who believe in that which has been revealed to you (O Prophet), and in that which was revealed before you; and they are certain of the Hereafter.

5. These are on the right path shown by their Lord, and these it is who shall be successful” (2:1-5).
It is evident that by pursuing this course, which has been shown by the Quran, one can become the most useful cosmopolitan or citizen of the world, and that will be his proudest achievement.

**Salvation**

I do not relish the use of the term Salvation, but, nevertheless, I employ it, for the reason that it is a popular and familiar word.

God being universal, His laws, physical as well as moral, must needs be universal. Accordingly the law of Salvation as described in the Quran is uniform and universal. This fact is described in the following verses:

(a) "This (i.e., salvation) shall not be in accordance with your (Muslims') vain desires, nor in accordance with the vain desires of the Peoples of the Book (i.e., Jews and Christians); whoever does evil, he shall be requited for it, and he will not find besides God a guardian nor a helper. And whoever does good, whether male or female, provided he or she is a believer—shall enter the garden of Paradise, and they shall not be treated unjustly in any way" (4:123, 124).

(b) "They are not all alike; there is among the People of the Book an upright party; they recite God's communications in the night time, and they adore Him, they believe in
God and the Last day, and they enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong; and they strive to excel one another in hastening to do good deeds; these are the righteous ones. And whatever good they do, they shall not be denied the fruit of it, for God knows the right ones” (3:112-114).

c) “So God granted their supplication: that I will not waste the work of any worker among you, whether male or female” (3:194).

d) “Whoever does good, whether male or female, and he or she is a believer, We will most certainly confer upon him or her a happy life. We will most certainly give them their reward for the best of what they do” (16:97).

e) “Whosoever does an atom’s weight of good, shall realise its fruit, and whosoever does an atom’s weight of evil, shall experience its result” (90:7, 8).

f) “Whosoever desires honour, then to God belongs the honour wholly. To Him do ascend the goodly words and the good deed exalts the doer of it” (35:10).

g) “Whosoever does good, it is to his own advantage, and whosoever does evil, it is against him; for your Lord is not in the least unjust to His servants” (41:46).
(h) “Certainly those who believe (i.e., Muslims) and those who are Jews, and the Sabians, and the Christians; whosoever believes in God and the Last day and does good, they shall have their reward from their Lord, and there shall be no fear for them, nor shall they grieve” (2 : 62).

These texts throw a flood of light on the fact that God’s law of salvation knows no discrimination, and that salvation is not the monopoly of any particular nation, and that no nation is debarred from attaining it.

These texts refute the false notion of those who consider themselves to be the favoured nation, and claim that they alone are entitled to enjoy Salvation. The Jews believe that they alone will enter Paradise, to the exclusion of every other nation. The Christians also believe the same. The Quran is aware of their respective claims and conviction:

“They hold that none shall enter Paradise except the Jews and the Christians”

(2 : 111).

“They hold that they alone are the children and beloved ones of God” (5 : 10).

The Quran, on the contrary, lays stress on the principle that Salvation cannot be attained by lip-profession, nor by the observance of any ritual, nor by belonging to a particular race or religion. It can only be attained by a sincere belief in the Universal
Providence, and by a life of practical generosity and righteousness.

IV. THE LAW OF SALVATION SHOULD NOT ENTERTAIN DISCRIMINATION OF ANY DESCRIPTION

(a) "And when his Lord tried Abraham in regard to certain commands, he fulfilled them. He said: Surely I make you a leader of men. Abraham said: And what about my offspring? God said: "My covenant does not include the unjust" (2:124).

The race of Abraham, and the race of Israel, as such, is not entitled to Salvation. Distinction shall be made between the doers of good and the doers of evil among them. Merit will entitle people to Salvation, and the mere fact of their belonging to a particular race or dynasty will be of no value at all.

(b) "On the occasion of Noah's flood disaster, God ordained: "Perdition for the unjust!" Noah pleaded and entreated for his son. God said: "O Noah! Surely he is not of your family; surely he is the doer of other than good deeds, therefore ask not of Me that of which you have no knowledge; surely I admonish you lest you should be of the ignorant" (11:46).

This text is illustrative of the principle that the mere fact of one's being a member of the family of a prophet does not entitle him to salvation; his unrighteous living stands in the way.
(c) "God sets forth an example for those who disbelieve—the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot. They were both under two of Our righteous servants, but they acted treacherously towards them, so they (i.e., these prophets) availed them naught against God" (66:10).

Relationship of, and association with, the prophets could not save these two women, because they were not virtuous.

But intrinsic worth is recognised even when you are living among those whose living is discredited. Pharaoh is known for his unbounded wickedness, but his wickedness had no adverse effect in the case of his wife, who was righteous. She had a kind and tender heart and was always ready to help the poor and to save them from barbarous cruelties; she resented and resisted such royal proclamations as oppressed them. Her conduct pleased God. The Quran mentions it:

(d) "And God sets forth an example for those who believe — the wife of Pharaoh, when she said: My Lord, Build for me a house with Thee in Paradise, and deliver me from Pharaoh and his practices, and deliver me from unjust people"! (66:11)

These verses mean to establish that God recognises and rewards intrinsic worth wherever it is met with, and punishes offence, regardless of the offender's birth, relationship, and position. God thus proves to be truly universal and just.
(e) In the following text, it is stated that the Prophet’s uncle was punished, and no regard was shown to his relationship with the Prophet of God. The Prophet did not take it as a disgrace that this event was recorded in the very pages of the Quran, because he wanted to enjoin that only righteous living can earn the pleasure of God Who is just.

The text reads:

“Perdition overtake both hands of Abu Lahab: He shall perish. His wealth and what he earns will not avail him. He shall soon enter fire, that has flames. And his wife, the bearer of slander, upon her neck a halter of strong rope”

(111:151).

Abu Lahab was the title of one of the uncles of the Prophet, his name being Abdul Uzza. His social position commanded general respect. But his birth and relationship were of little value in the eyes of God, because the man would not tread the path of righteousness.

(f) The Prophet Muhammad makes a remarkable announcement in this connection. The announcement is about himself. He observes that he is always first and foremost in obeying and carrying out the Divine Commandments, but should he happen to violate them, he fears that God’s punishment will overtake him.

Here is the announcement:
“Say: I am commanded to be the first and foremost of those who submit, and you should not be of the polytheists. Say, if I disobey my Lord, I fear for certain chastisement of a grievous day” (6:14, 15)

These texts lend themselves to make it as clear as possible that God’s moral and spiritual laws are uniform, just, consistent and relentless. There is no room in them for favouritism or discrimination. Punishment awaits the evil-doers and God’s pleasure is in store for all those who are Godfearing and doers of good (16:128).

This law of universal nature being rational, is calculated to enlighten the mind, and to become a source of satisfaction. It inspires faith and strengthens one’s belief that God is really the Lord and Cherisher of all the peoples of the world, and that He is as Merciful as He is Just in His treatment of mankind.

The Quran confirms the truth of previous revealed Books. This is consistent with the view that God has been Universal and Uniform in the ministration of His spiritual guidance. The Quran also informs us in so many words that there is light and guidance in these Divine Books.

The theme runs:

(a) “Surely We revealed the Torah in which is guidance and light” (5:44).
(b) "And We sent after them (i.e., Prophets) in their footsteps Jesus, son of Mary, verifying what was before him of the Torah, and We gave him the Gospel, in which is guidance and light" (5:46).

(c) "And We have revealed to you (i.e., the Prophet Muhammad) the Book with the truth, verifying the revealed Books that are before it, and a guardian over the Books" (5:48).

These verses stand in a chain of logical order, in which the revealed Books confirm the truth of one another. These teachings aim at widening our mental horizon and making us rational and broad-minded as well.

(d) "And certainly We gave wisdom to Luqman, saying, give thanks to God. And whoever is grateful, he is grateful for his own self, and whosoever is ungrateful, then surely God is Self-Sufficient, Praised"

(31:12).

Luqman was an Ethiopian Prophet. This chapter of the Quran is named after him, in order to confer upon him special prestige and privilege. The Muslim Scripture has thus illustrated that the Universal Providence provided the dark people with light and guidance just as Providence furnished other nations with Divine knowledge. In short, the dispensation of God kept in view all the nations of
the world without ignoring the dark or any other race. It thus becomes quite manifest that the Divine ministration, according to the Quran, has been uniform and provided generally, without any restriction or discrimination.

V. UNIVERSALISM IS A PROMINENT FEATURE OF ISLAMIC TEACHINGS

According to the Quran, there have been righteous and fair-minded persons among every community and among the followers of every religion. The following texts mention this fact and by so doing they widen our vision and broaden our sympathies:

(a) "And of Moses’ people there is a party who guide (people) with the truth, and with truth they administer justice" (7: 159).

(b) "You will certainly find the nearest in friendship to the Muslims those who call themselves Christians, this is because there are priests and monks among them, and because they do not like to behave arrogantly" (5: 82)

(c) "Most certainly We raised in every nation a Prophet, saying, serve God and shun the Devil. So there were some who accepted the guidance by the grace of God, and there were others against whom going astray was established" (16: 36).
(d) The following text makes a general statement to the effect that all mankind continues to have among them a group of people who love truth and guide others with truth, and administer justice with truth. Love of truth and justice having been implanted in the very nature of humanity, these qualities will be met with wherever mankind is found to exist.

The text reads:

"Among those whom We have created, are a people who guide with truth, and do justice with truth" (7:181).

These texts of the Quran have a clear and definite purpose in view, these lay stress on the fact that God undoubtedly is One, and that humanity is one, and that God’s laws are uniform, and that there are righteous men and women in every nation and in every country, and that their virtues must indeed be recognised and rewarded.

God has made ample provision for the guidance of entire humanity. The most important element of guidance is our conscience, which is helped by the light of our reason, and impelled by our volition. Altruism is also inherent in us, that inspires us to exercise generosity, and to do everything for the well-being of our fellow-beings. If this provision were not there, no amount of guidance provided in the revealed Books could help us. The light of the sun does not benefit a blind eye, and good eyesight cannot profit without the help of external light either. Similar is the case with human intellect and con-
science. Mental powers need Heavenly light in the form of revealed Books, granted through Prophets. It is the light of revealed Books that is responsible for the spread of morality among mankind. The Prophet through whom the revealed guidance was received, must be credited with the advancement of morality among mankind in general. We, therefore, owe them homage and sincere respect and esteem.

VI. ISLAM IS INTERNATIONAL

The message of Islam is not meant for a particular race or country. It is meant for all races and for all countries. That is the reason why the Prophet of Islam made the following proclamation of an international character. It therefore calls forth ready acceptance on the part of mankind in general.

(a) “Declare (O Prophet!) We believe in God and what was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and their descendants and what was given to Moses and Jesus, and what was given to the Prophets by their Lord; we do not make any distinction between any of them, and to Him do we submit” (2:136).

(b) “Declare: I believe in whatever book God has revealed, and I am commanded to be fair and just to you; God is our Lord and your Lord; we shall have fruit of our deeds and you will have the fruit of your deeds: no plea for quarrel be there between us and
you; God will unite us together, and to Him is our return” (42:15).

(c) “Say: O Followers of the Book! Come to an equitable understanding between us and you that we shall not adore but God, and that we shall hold that nobody shares with God the control of the Universe, and that some of us shall not take others (divine teachers) for lords beside God; but if they turn back, then say, bear witness that we submit to God’s injunctions” (3:63).

(d) “And do not dispute with the Followers of the Book except in the best manner—excepting those of them who act unjustly—and declare: We believe in what has been revealed to us and has been revealed to you, and our God and your God is one and the same, and to His injunctions do we submit” (29:46).

VII. DIGNITY OF MAN

The Quran states that God has given man the best of shape, and equipped him with adequate mental powers, with unlimited potentialities for advancement and attainment to the highest plan of morality, and that God implanted in men a goodly nature. God has thus conferred dignity on man, so that he may become His vicegerent on earth. These ideas are expressed in the following texts:
(a) "He created man, taught him the mode of expression."

(b) "And when your Lord said to the angels, I am going to create one who will rule the earth as My vicegerent" (2:30).

(c) "And He gave Adam knowledge of all things" (2:31).

Adam was equipped with the capacity to acquire knowledge of all things, all that paves the way for his greatness. Man was also provided with the power of expression as has been referred to in 55:3, 4; "He created man and taught him the mode of expression". Man was endowed both with the capacity of acquiring knowledge, and with the ability to impart that knowledge to his fellow beings. All this was designed to make man worth of the distinguished position assigned to him.

(d) "And when I have made man complete and have breathed into him My spirit, fall down (ye angels) making obeisance to him" (15:29).

(e) "God made good everything He has created, and He commenced the creation of man from dust. Then He made his progeny from an extract which was insignificant quantity of water. Then He made him complete and breathed into him His Spirit, and provided him with the ears and the eyes and the mind; little is it that you give thanks"!

(32:7-9).
(f) "O man! What has beguiled you from your Lord, the Gracious one, Who created you, then made you complete, then made you proportionate. Into what a fine form He was pleased to shape you"! (82 : 6-8).

(g) "Consider the creation of the soul and its perfection. God implanted in it knowledge to discern its deviation from the right path, and to discern the path of its righteousness" (91 : 7, 8).

(h) "Certainly We created man in the best make" (95 : 4).

(i) "And surely We have conferred dignity upon the children of Adam, and We have furnished him with good things" (17 : 70).

These texts show that God has conferred upon man a distinguished and privileged position, which should command respect. But the so-called civilised part of the world, which is in the grip of greed and selfishness, displays but little regard for the dignity of man. They hate those who happen to be different from them in the mode of their life, those who happen to be different in colour, and those who happen to speak a different language, those who happen to reside in different regions, those who happen to belong to a different race, or those who happen to entertain different religious views. In the light of doctrines propounded in the Quran, the enlightened Westerners should mend their ways and drop their narrow-mindedness.
VIII. NO SEGREGATION IN ISLAM

No caste or class is to be denounced and no measure of segregation is to be imposed on any class. According to Islam, there are no gentiles and no shudras. All mankind is regarded as pure. Inter-dining and inter-marrying are declared lawful. The text concerned reads:

“This day all good things are made lawful for you. And the food of those who have been given the Book is lawful for you, and your food is lawful for them. And so are lawful the chaste among the believing women and the chaste women from those who have been given the Book before you, when you give them their dowries, taking (them) in marriage, not fornicating nor taking them for paramours in secret” (5:5).

XI. THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT


A realistic, democratic and responsible government was established by the Prophet of Islam. As many as fourteen centuries before this time, equality of rights, independence of opinion, and freedom of expression, were all cultivated with a view to developing a sound national character. It is noteworthy that this was successfully achieved and carried out in practice in the teeth of two adverse factors. One of
them was the fact of the Prophet receiving revelation for the guidance of the people. He could very well play the role of shepherd, driving the sheep in the direction he liked; but in that case, he could not become a nation-builder nor a democrat.

The other factor that stood in the way, was the atmosphere of the neighbouring kingdoms, where despotism was the order of the day. Persia, which had extended its boundaries along the whole of eastern part of Arabia, was under the sway of a despotic monarch. In the north of Arabia was the empire of a Christian despot, titled Hircal, and the north-western part of Arabia was linked with the north-western part of Egypt, where Mecaucus wielded absolute autocratic authority. The Arabs were in communication with all the three neighbouring monarchies. The envoys and emissaries of these kingdoms visited the courts of one another. The conditions obtaining in those parts of the world combined with the fact that the Prophet was in communion with God, failed to induce the Prophet to assume the role of an absolute sovereign. On the contrary, he rose much higher, and his wisdom did not allow any obstacle to prevent him from setting his nation on a sound democratic footing.

He declared that he had been commanded by God to hold consultations with the faithful in matters of state (3:158). He would accordingly hold parleys in the precincts of the mosque to which everybody had an easy access. The chief feature of
those parleys was that decisions were taken by the vote of the majority; sometimes the majority vote was against the opinion of the Prophet himself. But he always accepted and carried out these decisions willingly and earnestly and that impressed the nation with the sincerity and honesty of purpose on the part of the Prophet. The question of the election of the Prophet’s successor was not settled till after his death. When the Prophet lay on his death-bed, he did not nominate his successor. This important affair was left in the hands of the Muslim public. Accordingly, the public elected Abu Bakr as his successor, or Caliph of the Prophet. The first Caliph made the following proclamation, which breathed the true spirit of democracy:

“Follow me as long as I follow the commandment of God and the Sunnah of the Prophet”.

“Should I happen to deviate from this course, you should put me on the right path.”

The Muslim assemblage responded and observed:

“Should you go wrong, we shall correct you with the spears of our lances!”

This shows that both the ruler and the ruled were fully conscious of the essentials of a responsible government and were determined to maintain it.

Abu Bakr was succeeded by Umar the Great. A mighty ruler as he was, he was every inch a democrat
of democrats. His practice proved him to be so. Once while delivering a sermon from the pulpit, he was interrupted by one of the women who were assembled there. This woman remarked that the Caliph was denying them a right concerning dowry which God had granted them. She quoted the following text of the Quran to support her contention:

“If you have given any of the women folk a heap of gold as a dowry, you should not take it back.”

The Caliph on hearing this was thunder-struck. He confessed openly that he was wrong and appreciated and admired the woman for having corrected him. “The women of Madina,” observed the Great Caliph Umar, “are indeed better versed in the knowledge of religion than Umar. This shows that independence of opinion and freedom of expression had become the characteristic of the Muslim nation. The Caliph Umar was on another occasion confronted with an embarrassing situation. While addressing the congregation from the pulpit, he was interrupted by one of the assembled people:

“We are neither disposed,” remarked he, “to listen to you nor to obey you, unless you explain how you have managed to have a long flowing shirt cut for you with that insufficient piece of cloth, which was apportioned to you in common with us all.”
This struck silence in the assemblage. Instead of being enraged, the Caliph was calm and serene. He said: “My son Abdullah will give the explanation.” Accordingly Abdullah stood up and stated, “You know, only one wrapper fell to the share of each one of us, myself receiving one. Having perceived that father would like to have a full and flowing shirt cut for him, I presented my wrapper to him and he had the shirt made for him out of those two wrappers.”

“We shall now listen and obey” was the declaration made by the accuser who felt satisfied. This illustration should suffice to show that democracy established by the Prophet was realistic and exemplary.

X. THE TREATMENT METED OUT TO THE NON-MUSLIM SUBJECTS

Non-Muslim subjects enjoyed perfect religious freedom and they lived their own mode of life. “There shall be no compulsion in religion” was the Divine injunction in their favour. The Prophet of Islam observed that the non-Muslim subjects enter into a covenant with God and His Apostle, as soon as they agree to live in a Muslim State. That this pact concluded by God and by His Apostle must needs be fulfilled. The Muslims strictly adhered to these instructions. The Caliph Umar made a will to the following effect:

“I impress on my [successor that he should bear in mind the pact of God and His
Apostle with the non-Muslim subjects; he must fulfil their pact; he must protect their rights even if he had to make war for their sake; he must not impose any such duties on them as are beyond their capacity."

The self-same laws governed them as were applied to the Muslims; no invidious discrimination was allowed to be practised. There was no trace of discrimination, no restraint or reserve in the treatment meted out to the non-Muslims, and there was not the slightest tinge of favouritism or any special privileges for the Muslims. Whatever part of the world was conquered by the Muslims, the people of that land felt satisfied with the even social justice and fair treatment that was shown to them. Take, for instance, the case of Egypt. When that country was conquered by Amr bin 'As, he made an announcement of great consequence to the effect that all the subjects shall enjoy freedom of conscience and shall enjoy equality of rights.

The Prophet had observed that Egypt would fall; in that case the Muslims must cherish welfare of the Egyptians, for they would enter into an implicit pact with God and His Apostle by acknowledging the Muslims as their rulers. That pact must be fulfilled. Besides that, it was required of the Muslims to show respectful regard for the relationship of their great-grandmother, Hagar, who hailed from Egypt. The conquerors carried out these instructions to the great satisfaction of the Egyptian
public. The Governor declared that the non-Egyptian foreigners who had been treated like slaves, shall also enjoy equal rights with the Egyptian and Muslim subjects. Thus the Muslim rule brought about an unexpected revolution in Egypt by uplifting and ennobling the downtrodden people of that region. It should be remembered that the Egyptians were Christians.

Now as to the treatment meted out to the Jews of Yemen. The instruction given by the Prophet to Mu‘āz bin Jabal and Musa Ash‘āri, who were appointed Governor and Qazi respectively for that part of Arabia, are noteworthy. "Listen," said the Prophet, "you are going to the people of the Book. Treat them kindly; and do not be harsh. Do not inflict any injustice on them, for God listens to the cries of those who are treated unjustly. No designs of exploitation are to be contemplated," said the Prophet.

**Rules and Regulations of a responsible Democratic Government as laid down in the Quran**

(a) The Prophet is told in the following verse to conduct the affairs of the state in a parliamentary and democratic manner: "Take counsel with them in the affairs of the State" (3:158).

(b) The Muslims are likewise called upon to show that their genius should dictate to
decide their affairs by consulting the members of the nation. "And those who respond to their Lord, and keep up prayers, and their rule is to take counsel among themselves" (42 : 38).

(c) "God enjoins emphatically the doing of justice and exercising of generosity and the monetary help to the kindred and He forbids indecency, evil, and oppression; He admonishes you in order that you may be mindful" (16 : 90).

(d) "God commands to make over trusts to those worthy of them, and that when you judge between people, you are to judge with justice; God admonishes you with what is best; God is surely All-seeing, and All-hearing" (4 : 58).

The last verse not only lays stress on handing over trust of money and property to their legitimate owners but also on entrusting the affairs of government to those who possess adequate ability to conduct those affairs in a fair and proper manner. Both the rulers and the ruled should be true to their charge and responsibility.

(e) "And do not touch the property of the orphans but to the best of their interest, until they attain their maturity; and give full measures and weight with justice. We do not impose on any person a duty except to
the extent of his or her ability; and when you make an utterance, then be just, though it may go against your relations, and fulfil God’s covenant; He has thus enjoined you in order that you may be mindful.” (6:153).

(f) “O you who believe (i.e., Muslims), be upright and upholders of justice for God’s pleasure: Bearers of witness with justice, and let not enmity of a people incite you to act unjustly; act equitably, for that is nearer to righteousness, and cherish fear of God, for God is certainly Aware of what you do” (5:6).

(g) “Cooperate with one another in matters of virtue and goodness and do not co-operate in matters of sin and aggression; cherish fear of God: God is certainly Severe in requiting” (5:2).

(h) “And among men is he whose utterances about the affairs of this life are pleasantly pious, and he calls on God to witness as to the honesty of his intentions, yet he is the most violent of adversaries, and when he turns round, he does mischief to the limit of his efforts and destroys tithe and the stock of humanity; God never likes mischief-making, and when it is pointed out to him that he should fear God, he is seized with pride and prestige and instead of
desisting, carries out his sinful intentions”
(2 : 204-206).

XI. COVENANTS, PACTS, PROMISES
AND OATHS

The Quran lays special stress on the fulfilment of covenants and pacts, and warns mankind against the violation of them, for God holds watch over their actions, and knows what motives are at the back of their dealings. The malady of not keeping pacts is an epidemic in the civilised nations of the world. It is indeed most dishonest and most injurious to violate pacts and promises. The Quran foresaw this moral disease that involves stupendous loss of material and moral values. The Quran has provided enlightenment on this serious topic in the following text:

(a) “O you who believe (i.e., Muslims), fulfil the obligations” (5 : 1).

The Arabic word “Uqūd” used in this verse denotes all pacts, covenants, treaties, contracts and promises. It also includes Divine ordinances given for the welfare of the individual and for that of the society in general, and it includes all kinds of pacts and treaties concluded by communities and states. Keeping of pacts and promises has been urged, because it promotes well-being of mankind, and it helps to inspire mutual trust.

(b) “Those with whom you make an agreement and then they break their agreement every
time, and they do not cherish fear of God, such characterless people are to be de-
precated” (8:56).

(c) “This is a declaration of immunity by God and His Apostle towards those of the ido-
laters with whom you entered into an agreement” (9:1).

“But those of the idolaters with whom you made an agreement, then they have not failed you in anything and have not backed up any one against you, so fulfil their agreements, to the end of the term; surely God loves those who are Godfearing (who do not violate their pledges)” (9:4).

(d) “You make your oaths to be means of deceit between you, for the reason that one nation is stronger than the other: God only tries you by that” (16:92).

(e) “Surely God enjoins the doing of justice and the doing of good to others, and giving aid to the kindred, and He forbids indecency and evil and aggression . . . . And fulfil the covenant made in the name of God when you have made a covenant; and do not break the oaths after making them fast, and you have indeed made God a surety for you; surely God knows what you do” (16:90, 91).
(f) “It is no righteousness that you turn your faces in prayer towards the East and the West, but righteousness is that one should believe in God and the last day and the angels and the revealed books and the prophets, that one should give away wealth out of love for Him to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and the beggars, and for the emancipation of captives, that one should keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate; and those who keep their pacts, and those who exercise patience in affliction and in time of war. These are they who are true to their faith and these are they who are Godfearing” (2:177).

(g) “Those Muslims shall be successful who are keepers of their trusts and their covenants” (23:8).

(h) “And those who are constant at their prayers; and those in whose wealth there is a fixed portion for the poor . . . . and those who are faithful to their trusts and their covenants” (70:23, 24, 32).

(i) “And fulfil the pact, surely every pact shall be questioned about (by God)” (17:34).

In addition to these texts, there are still others that urge likewise that pacts and promises must be kept in all fairness, with firm faith in the fact that
God watches whether or not we are honest and faithful. It is required of us to always bear in mind that every pact that we concluded before, and in the presence of God, and that we must be faithful in keeping our agreements and covenants and leagues.

These instructions imply apprehensions that nations will find excuses to break and violate their pacts and covenants, and will thus create mistrust and dissatisfaction, which will lead to serious consequences.

XII. CARE OF THE POOR

Whereas individuals are called upon to spend part of their earnings for the welfare and relief of the poor, a Muslim State also is directed that the public treasury must make provision for the well-being of the poorer sections of the populace:

(a) "They (i.e., the believers) feed for the love of God the poor and the orphan and the captive" (76:8).

(b) "One should give away wealth out of the love for God to the near of kin, the orphans, the needy, and the wayfarer, and the beggars, and for the emancipation of the captives" (2:177).

(c) "And give to the near of kin his due and to the needy and the wayfarer, but do not squander money" (17:26).

(d) "You should give to the near of kin his due and to the needy and wayfarer; this is
better for those who desire God’s pleasure; and these it is who shall be successful” (30:38).

(e) “And in their property there is a portion due to him who begs and to him who is destitute” (51:19).

(f) “Those who are constant at their prayer; and those in whose wealth there is a fixed portion for him who begs and for him who is destitute” (79:23-25).

(g) “Exercising of charity should not be followed by giving trouble to the poor, neither by show of it nor by domineering behaviour”.

(h) “Do not give away only those things that have become useless; God’s pleasure demands that you should part with good things. O you believers! spend benevolently in behalf of the poor of the good things that you earn, and of what We have brought forth” (2:267).

(i) If you exercise charity openly, it is all right; and if you conceal it and give it to the poor, it is better for you” (2:271).

(j) “Those who spend their wealth by night and by day, secretly and openly, they shall have reward from their Lord” (42:274).

(k) “Charity becomes useless if it is followed by domineering reproach and giving of
trouble, like him who spends his wealth to be seen of men” (2:265).

(1) “Those who spend their wealth to seek the pleasure of God and for their own satisfaction” (2:265).

**State Revenues must Allocate Expenditure for the poor**

(a) “And know that whatever thing you acquire in war, ‘a fifth of it’ is for God and for the Apostle” *i.e.*, it will be distributed among the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer” (8:41).

(b) The poor-rate will be collected by the state officials and shall be distributed as laid down below:

“Alms are meant only for the poor and the needy and the officials (appointed for the collection of poor-rate), and for those whose hearts are inclined to truth, and for the ransoming of captives, and for those in debt, and in the way of God, and for the wayfarer; it is an ordinance from God; and God is Knowing, Wise” (4:60).

(c) “Whatever God has restored to His Apostle from the people of the towns, it is for God and for His Apostle (i.e., it shall be distributed to) the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and wayfarer, lest wealth should circulate by turns among the rich alone” (59:7).
XIII. THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND THE RICH PEOPLE

Every community has two classes among them that are most influential \textit{i.e.}, the affluent class and those who are in charge of religious affairs. They can do a lot of good, but they can also work havoc in most cases. The affluent class injures the bodies and religious leaders injure the souls of mankind, while both are seized with the greed of increasing their wealth. They are prone to worship mammon, and out to exploit those who look up to them for guidance.

Both these classes are indicted. The indictment of the Quran reads:

\begin{itemize}
  \item [(a)] "O believers, most surely many of the doctors of law and the monks eat away the property of mankind falsely, and make them deviate from God's path; and as for those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend them in God's way, announce to them a painful chastisement" (9: 34).
  \item [(b)] "They have taken their doctors of law and the monks for lords besides God and they have also taken the Messiah, son of Mary, for Lord; while they were enjoined that they should serve God alone, for there is no God but He; far from His glory be what they associate with Him" (9: 31).
\end{itemize}

The above mentioned classes enjoy incredible prestige and privilege and they exercise irresistible
influence on the public as well as those to whom the reins of government are entrusted. In order to maintain the dignity and independence of man, Islam denounced them, and condemned them vehemently, and especially dealt a death-blow to priestcraft. Man can indeed perform the acts of devotion and offer his prayer without any intermediary. There are no rituals in Islam, they may require the services of clerics; there is nothing to be consecrated, and none to be ordained. Priesthood has therefore been abolished, and mankind freed from its bondage.

These detailed discussions have covered an extensive ground by touching on all the essential requirements of the modern age. The principles outlined therein are manifestly such as would certainly afford satisfaction and promote peace and happiness among the nations of the world. Radio and aeroplane have supplied means of bringing various peoples into contact. Islamic ideology can utilise this physical contact advantageously for bringing about the unification of the hearts. It is this realisation of great consequence that Islamic doctrines have in view. These doctrines proved effective during the life-time of the Prophet, when a realistic brotherhood of humanity came into existence; and this is being demonstrated every year at Mecca on the occasion of pilgrimage. Different nations with different colours and different languages present there a scene of corporate life on the plane of perfect equality. The same doctrines will prove effective now. There are without doubt in the Western countries persons
of light and learning who appreciate these views, and it is expected of them to give publicity to these ideologies with a view to promoting the good of humanity at large. The doctrines that enjoin that the Creator and Cherisher of the entire humanity is one and the same, can certainly knit mankind together with the ties of affection and fellow-feeling, eliminating all those prejudices that are eating into the vitals of humanity, and are responsible for all the chaotic discord prevalent among the children of God. Let brave persons come forward, and work earnestly to spread these Divine ethics that edify us and change our outlook on life, and thus help to advance and establish universal peace and happiness. There is every reason that persons having such a resolve shall succeed in their noble enterprise, and shall thus reap a very rich reward.