

# ISLAMOPHOBIA IN AMERICA<sup>1</sup>

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**Definition:** Islamophobia has been described by the Runnymede Trust<sup>3</sup> as follows:

"In the case of the new coinage 'islamophobia', both kinds of dread are implied: the object of fear is both out there, beyond national boundaries, and also here, all too close to home. Precisely because Islam is perceived to have this dual location it is all the more feared and disliked by many non-Muslims. Recurring metaphors to refer to Muslim communities within Europe include fifth column, bridgehead, enclave, Trojan horse and enemy within.

"Islamophobia is [the] dread or hatred of Islam and of Muslims. It has existed in western countries and cultures for several centuries but in the last twenty years has become more explicit, more extreme and more dangerous. It is an ingredient of all sections of the media, and is prevalent in all sections of the society."

**Who are responsible for islamophobia?** I begin with the clarification that this is in no way an exhaustive study of Islamophobia in the West but rather as an exposure of a small tip of the iceberg. Islamophobic forces in the West may be divided into two classes; **(1) Promoters of Islamophobia,** and **(2) Contributors to Islamophobia.** Each group is profiled in the following, briefly.

### **1. PROMOTERS OF ISLAMOPHOBIA**

These are the people who either dug out islamophobia (mis- and dis-)information from one-thousand year old material left behind by the Crusaders in Europe and presented it in modern languages, and/or they developed new ideas and new methodology for the generation, promotion and propagation of islamophobia world-wide, particularly in the West. Islamophobia promoters may be divided into three subgroups, namely, (a) Secular Fundamentalists, (b) Zionist Fundamentalists, and (c) Christian Fundamentalists also known as Born-Again and Evangelical movements, (d) Hindu Fundamentalists, (e) the Slavs, each with its own agenda against Islam. Some details about these three subgroups were presented in the First Conference on ISLAM IN AMERICA in 1997 under the title, ISLAM IN AMERICA: ROUGH ROAD AHEAD, A SURVEY OF ANTI-ISLAM ACTIVITIES<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> This is the part II of the paper that was presented under the title, "ISLAM IN AMERICA: ROUGH ROAD AHEAD, A SURVEY OF ANTI-ISLAM ACTIVITIES", at the First Conference on ISLAM IN AMERICA, held at Indianapolis University, Indiana, July 4-6, 1997. The Conference was jointly sponsored by Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS) and Indianapolis University. The Part II was presented at the Second Annual Conference on ISLAM IN AMERICA, held at Hyatt Regency O'Hare Hotel in Chicago, Illinois, July 3-5, 1998. The Conference was jointly organized by the ISNA and AMSS.

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<sup>3</sup> ISLAMOPHOBIA, ITS FEATURES AND DANGERS, A CONSULTATION PAPER by The Runnymede Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia, The Runnymede Trust, 133 Aldersgate Street EC1 4JA, England, U.K., 1997.

<sup>4</sup> "Islam in America: Images and Challenges, Phylis Lan Lin (Ed.), 1998. Asian Programs, University of Indianapolis, 1400 E. Hanna Ave., Indianapolis IN 46227-3697, \$20.00. Phone (317) 788-3288, Fax: (317) 788-3275, Email: [lin@facstaff.unindy.edu](mailto:lin@facstaff.unindy.edu)

## **2. CONTRIBUTORS TO ISLAMOPHOBIA.**

In addition to above five subgroups who are actively working against Islam, there are two subgroups who are hurting Muslims while working in the name of Islam. These two subgroups are (A) Pseudo-Islamic cults, and (b) Muslims at the margin and are the focus of this paper. Some among these two subgroups are directly or indirectly helped by anti-Islam forces all over the world, particularly in the West. People in this class are not responsible for generating islamophobia nor do they promote it. However, they contribute to islamophobia passively either by their blasphemous beliefs or they contribute through their un-Islamic practices and conduct. In addition, some in these subgroups are naive about activities of the adversaries of Islam, timid about speaking out, developed indifference and complacency or have bad strategies to combat islamophobia.

The two main textual sources of Islamic teachings are (1) the Qur'an, and (2) Hadith, sometimes referred to as the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad<sup>5</sup> and includes his sayings, practices and approvals. The Qur'an is explicit, "*Whoso obeys the Messenger, obeys Allah, and whoso turns away: We have not sent you as a warder over them*"<sup>6</sup>. Besides obedience of the Messenger of Allah there is no blind following of any one. Allah admonishes, in the Qur'an, against blind following: "*They have taken as lords beside Allah their rabbis and their monks ('ulama, muftis, sufi sheikhs, imams and perceived awlia-Allah in case of Muslims)*"<sup>7</sup>. The Qur'an was revealed to Prophet Muhammad and the world is supposed to understand the Qur'an as taught by Allah's chosen Messenger. Allah also emphasized in the Qur'an that He perfected His *deen* (translated as religion); we read in the Qur'an: "*This day have I perfected your deen for you and completed My favor unto you, and have chosen for you as deen Al-Islam*"<sup>8</sup>. After this pronouncement by Allah, there is no more room left for any addition or deletion to the teachings of Islam. However, it is understood from some saying of the Prophet that agreement of his companions on a given matter is also binding on Muslims to follow. After the period of the companions, no one, however great a scholar he may be, is authorized to add to or delete from Islamic beliefs and practices. Any addition or deletion to the Islamic beliefs and practices is mis-guidance and all such mis-guidance leads to the hell fire. Allah admonishes in the Qur'an: "*Do you believe in a part of the Book and disbelieve in another part? And what is the reward of those who do so, except ignominy in the life of the world, and on the Day of Resurrection they will be consigned to the most grievous punishment. For Allah is not unaware of what you do*"<sup>9</sup>. It is obvious, therefore, to define Islam and non-Islam using the criteria given in the Qur'an and Hadith. Those who call themselves "Muslims" but their beliefs and practices are at variance with Islamic teachings are, in fact, pseudo-Muslims and their religion is pseudo-Islam. Those who call themselves "Muslims" but violate some of the beliefs and/or practices of Islam as given in the Qur'an and Hadith are living at the margin of Islam.

### **(A) PSEUDO-ISLAMIC CULTS.**

There are several cults who claim to be Muslims but have little or nothing common with Muslims except Arabic terminology used by the Muslims all over the world. It is the jargon, sometimes added by their garments which give a false impression to their followers and others that they are

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<sup>5</sup> (S) superscript represents "*Sal-Allahu 'alaihi wa sallam*", meaning peace and salutations of Allah be upon him. All Muslims are urged to say these words of peace and salutations on the Prophet whenever they read or hear his name.

<sup>6</sup> The Qur'an 4:6. It is customary in the Muslim circles to put emphasis on translation of the Qur'an by putting italics.

<sup>7</sup> The Qur'an 9:31. The Prophet hinted in response to a question that this verse referred to blind following.

<sup>8</sup> The Qur'an 5:3. Prophet Muhammad added that he has left nothing good which he has not told his followers.

<sup>9</sup> The Qur'an 2:85. Giving lip service to something but not living by it is disbelief. For example, accepting the law of 30 MPH speed limit in the city but speeding to 60 MPH is rejection of the law and may be subjected to arrest, prosecution and fines.

within the Muslim Ummah while they are not and non-Muslims see them as people from another planet. These groups are barriers in the spread of Islam in the West due to their racist slogans, paganish ideas and mis-interpretation of Islamic teachings. These groups have tacit approval of the West because they arrest the spread of Islam, particularly in the white population who hold the reigns of power in the West. There are rumors that many of these groups receive covert financial help and guidance from anti-Islam forces. A few well known pseudo-Islamic cults are mentioned below.

**(i) "Ahmadiya Movement in Islam".** This group is also known as Qadiyanis and/or Ahmadis, even though some among them may not like one of the two terms. This is the oldest among pseudo-Islamic cults in America going back to 1920s and their first mosque was established in 1930-31 in Chicago. Incidentally, it was in 1930 when "the Nation of Islam" was established in Detroit, Michigan and adopted the Qadiyani translation as their official Qur'an.

**(ii) Moorish Science Temple.** This was established by Nobel Drew Ali who wrote his own "Koran" in English and believed to be a prophet by his followers. This group is divided further and one of its off-shoots is Moorish Divine Movement. In general, they have some secret teachings and do not believe in selling their material in the open market.

**(iii) Islamic Nubean Hebrews.** This cult was established by "Imam Isa" who has published many books of his teachings. His main theme was to attack Sunni Islam. He claimed for himself to be a "Mahdi" and "Hadi" among many other attributes. They wear Arab style clothes including turbans and women wear veil over their faces. He published pictures of all prophets mentioned in the Qur'an and shown their faces to be Negroid. He also called his group as "Ansarullah Community". In 1995, Imam Isa disavowed Islam and claimed to have become a Jew along with his followers, only Allah knows best.

**(iv) "The Nation of Islam".** In 1930 a White American by the name Wallace D. Ford, who later changed his last name to Fard, established the Nation of Islam in Detroit. After his mysterious disappearance in 1933 his disciple Elijah Poole, took over the leadership and changed his own name to Elijah (for Arabic Ilyas) Muhammad and established a new religion and called it "the Lost Found Nation of Islam" or "the Nation of Islam (NOI)" for short. He used Ahmadiyah (or Qadiyani) corrupt translation of the Qur'an but heavily borrowed teachings from the Christian Bible. Elijah Muhammad rejected the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad<sup>(5)</sup> as reported in Hadith collections. He thoroughly corrupted Islamic practices of Salah and Sawm, ignored Hajj and he established "Zakah" as 2.5% on income of his follower which brought a lot of money for the organization and it became financially rich. However, his slogan was racist and demanded a separate country to be carved out for the American Blacks from the U.S. territory. He claimed that Wallace Fard was Allah (God) in person and himself was his messenger. This movement temporarily died in 1975 on the death of Elijah Muhammad and his son Wallace D. Muhammad brought his followers to Sunni Islam. However, in 1978 Louis Farrakhan left Wallace D. Muhammad's new Islamic organization to reestablish the Nation of Islam (NOI). For more information about this cult see the III&E publications **"Islam or Farrakhanism"** and **"Islam and Farrakhanism Compared"**<sup>10</sup>.

In February 1997, Louis Farrakhan was introduced as a "God's Messenger" and "Messenger of Allah" which he confirmed by saying that he received message from Allah. Despite his

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<sup>10</sup> M. Amir Ali, P.D., "ISLAM OR FARRAKHANISM?" a booklet, and, "ISLAM AND FARRAKHANISM COMPARED", a brochures. Both are available from the III&E. See foot note #2 for address. Farrakhanism is a new coinage since 1991 to replace the misnomer, "The Nation of Islam".

announcement to the contrary he remains a teacher of paganish beliefs and practices of Elijah Muhammad.

(v) Five Percenters. This cult has a lot in common with the Nation of Islam. They consider themselves belonging to top 5% of the people; they perceive themselves as an elite group in the society. Their beliefs are not compatible with Islamic beliefs nor are all their practices Islamic.

(vi) Other cults. There are many other small cults in North America who claim to be Muslims but have nothing in common with Islam of Qur'an and Sunnah. According to one account there are seventeen pseudo-Islamic cults operating in North America under a variety of names.

### **(B) MUSLIMS AT THE MARGIN.**

I have no intention of naming groups in this class of people but I would like to provide those characteristics which distinguish them as those who are working for the benefit of anti-Islam forces whether knowingly or unknowingly and contribute to islamophobia significantly.

(i) "Non-Practicing Muslims". It is hypocrisy to claim to be a Muslim but not perform five time daily *Salah*, not pay *Zakah* when it is due, not go for *Hajj* when it is obligatory and not fast in the month of Ramadan while there is no *shari'ah* excuse. Some call themselves as "non-practicing Muslims" whereas there is no such term to be found in the Qur'an or sound Hadith collections. Qur'an classifies people as believers (*mu'minoon*), disbelievers (*kuffar* or *kafiroon*) and hypocrites (*munafiqoon*); there is no such term as "non-practicing Muslims". A person who claims to be a Muslim can downgrade himself to become a hypocrite (*munafiq*) or upgrade himself to become a believer (*mu'min*) and after that there are higher levels of believers. Such "non-practicing Muslims" only create misunderstanding about Islam. This contributes to islamophobia!

(ii) Muslims with un-Islamic character. Again it is hypocrisy to claim to be a Muslim, to believe in the Day of Judgement and to believe that Allah is All-Knowing, All-Seeing, All-Hearing, yet steal, cheat, lie, deceive, be treacherous, break promises, contracts and covenants, be arrogant, murder, fornicate, adulterate, consume what is declared to be *haram*, commit crimes, involve in spreading false rumors, back-bite, be unjust and oppressive. This contributes to islamophobia!

(iii) Blind following of *sheikhs, mawlanas, imams, murshids* and *mullas*. They may not say that their sheikh is infallible but *de facto* they treat him as infallible. Blind following of any sheikh or an imam, living or dead, is not Islam. Such "Muslims" are closer to the Christians, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists and other religions who believe in an infallible class of priests. Frequently, these sheikhs are guilty of inventing new practices alien to Islam but they call them Islamic which gives rise to misunderstanding and confusion about true Islam thus contributing to islamophobia. Muslims do need honest teachers of the Qur'an and Sunnah but do not need impostors who only enslave the masses in blindly following fallible opinions and misguided paths.

(iv) Shun study of the Qur'an and Hadith. Their underlying assumption appears to be that all wisdom and understanding of the Qur'an and Hadith was exhausted within the first few (perhaps five) centuries of Islam and what was left for the people of later centuries was to blindly follow the people of earlier period. They insist that if anyone desires to study the Qur'an and Hadith he should go to certain certified '*alim, sheikh, mawlana, murshid* and *mullah*'. There are "ulama" and "muftis", even in Chicago, admonishing the Muslims in their speeches and Friday *khutub*

(sermons), not to try to understand the Qur'an and Hadith. They are adamant that studying *tafaseer* and *ahadith* independent of any living '*alim* and reading commentaries leads to mis-guidance and that independent thinking in the light of existing body of knowledge is not acceptable. Thus it is their contention that no one has any right or privilege of disagreeing with Imams or shuyukh of the early period even though they were never declared to be prophets or messengers receiving revelation from Allah. Such Islam is more tradition-based than the revealed knowledge-based which would be a corrupt Islam giving misunderstanding to the non-Muslims. Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism have none or little revealed knowledge available resulting in dependence upon traditions developed over a period of centuries by fallible priests. Traditional and cultural Islam has adopted non-Islamic beliefs (*aqeedah*) and practices creating confusion. This contributes to islamophobia!

**(v) Replacement of the Qur'an and Hadith with writings of their *sheikhs, imams, mawlanas, murshids, mullahs* and such leaders.** Despite the availability of the Qur'an and Hadith, the primary sources of Islamic guidance, dependence upon tertiary and quaternary sources<sup>11</sup> corrupts the religion giving wrong message to non-Muslims. Those who depend upon writings of fallible "scholars" discourage the study of the Qur'an and Hadith, even in the mosque; they frown upon ordinary Muslims who study Qur'an and Hadith and admonish them for doing so. It is noteworthy that writings of fallible people, how eloquent they may be, how well researched they may be, cannot be a substitute for the Qur'an and Sunnah nor they add anything authentic to the knowledge of Islam. Allah has declared that He has perfected this *deen* and Prophet Muhammad added that he left nothing good which he has not taught to his followers. Detachment from the Qur'an and Sunnah gives rise to confusion about authenticity of Islamic sources for human guidance. This contributes to islamophobia!

**(vi) Slogan of Wahabism.** There are those who call certain Muslims as Wahabi, Najadi, beneficiary of oil money and so on because these Muslims are calling people to the Qur'an and Hadith and admonishing people against innovation in the *deen (bid'ah)* and associationism (*shirk*). As a matter of fact, the term "Wahabism" was coined by the British in the 1820s to create hate against the Syed Ahmad Shaheed's movement, a Hanafi Muslim leadership, against *bid'ah, shirk* and rule of the British and Sikh in India. The British were very successful in pitting Muslims against Muslims under the slogan of wahabism and destroyed Syed Ahmad Shaheed's movement. The British were followed by the French and orientalist who incorporated the term Wahabism in their writings and gullible Muslims adopted the term and some Muslims adapted to it. Use of the British term "Wahabism" only contributes to hate propaganda of the West against Islam. The term "Wahabism" implies unacceptable innovations whereas those labelled as Wahabis are themselves against innovations in Islam. Use of the term Wahabism is to play into the hands of anti-Islam forces. This contributes to islamophobia!

**(vii) Islamic Fundamentalism.** Relatively recently, Israeli strategists suggested application of the term "fundamentalism" to Muslims to divide Muslims into two camps, one of "fundamentalists" and the other of "moderates" and let them fight each other. Western media and politicians immediately

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<sup>11</sup> For the sake of simplicity and clarity, Islamic source material is divided into several levels. Primary level material is the Qur'an and Hadith in the Arabic language. Once the Qur'an and Hadith are translated (by fallible human beings), the probability of diluting or corrupting the meaning exists and making them lower level source or secondary sources. The books and articles written and based on and quoting from the Qur'an and Hadith are tertiary sources. In case of a tertiary source, the author himself culled the material from the Qur'an and Hadith, providing with the level of authenticity of Hadith referred to, and his use of the material with full understanding. Articles and books written in which tertiary sources were used for the Qur'an and Hadith, should be considered quaternary level sources. An honest author must give reference of his tertiary sources even when he is quoting Qur'an and Hadith but which he himself has not verified.

accepted Israeli suggestion, even many "Muslim" governments began using the term "*usoliyoon*" exact translation of fundamentalists. So called Muslim governments went one step further and began arresting, jailing and torturing those who were perceived of being "fundamentalists". My suggestion to the Muslims is to accept and adopt the term "fundamentalism" and all Muslims be fundamentalists which will put "moderates" to shame. After all, Islam is living by the literal understanding and application of the Qur'an and Hadith which is in parallel with the Fundamentalist Christians who promote the use and application of the Bible, literally. It is not Islam to take the Qur'an as a book of allegories and metaphors which can be interpreted by anyone to his wishes while ignoring the Hadith treasures, this is fundamentalism by nature. The Muslims should not allow Secular Fundamentalists, Jewish Fundamentalists, Christian Fundamentalists, Hindu Fundamentalists, or "Muslim" hypocrites who are labeled as "Moderate Muslims" to divide the Muslims as Muslim Fundamentalists and Muslim Moderates. If the Muslims allow anti-Islam forces to continue the use of the term "Islamic Fundamentalism" in a derogatory manner with impunity it will be a contribution to islamophobia.

**(viii) Defenders of *shirk* and *bid'ah*.** Among Muslims there are many levels of *shirk* and *bid'ah* and there are many subgroups depending upon their *aqeedah*. Some believe that the Messenger of Allah was not a human being but light (*noor*) and his knowledge was perfect and complete. Some believe that Prophet Muhammad was created human being but his soul was created first, even before Adam. Some believe that Prophet Muhammad is alive in his grave and he eats and prays (*salat*) in his grave and similar such ridiculous beliefs. Some believe that *Auwlia-Allah* never died, therefore, it is permissible to pray to them to be intercessors with Allah. All such people celebrate *Mawlid An-Nabi* or *Milad An-Nabi* and promote many celebration for which there is no authority in the Qur'an or Sunnah. In addition, they celebrate days for one or more perceived saints, such as Abdul Quadar Jilani, Chishti, Naqshbandi, Suhrawardi, Mawlavi, Tijani and other "infallible imams" who were, in fact, as fallible as any human being could be. Such practices convey the message that Islam is just another paganish religion. This contributes to islamophobia!

**(ix) Shun politics.** There are three distinct groups among Muslims who promote the idea of shunning politics for three different reasons, all are equally bad. (a) Some say that politics should not be talked about in their circles whether in a masjid or in a house. Without saying it, they have excluded politics from Islam. (b) Another group has the point of view that if the country is not established on Islamic principles, participation in politics is forbidden, irrespective of the country whether it is a Muslim majority country or a Muslim minority country. This group considers that participation in politics under a non-Islamic system is disbelief (*kufir*). For them, even casting a ballot in America is *kufir*. (c) Another group has teachings that as long as a government allows Muslims to pray and do their *halaqa of dhikr*, this government should be prayed for and any activity to bring down tyrants, even through elections, is wrong. They oppose for their followers participating in politics. Such beliefs and practices about participation in politics by the Muslims send the message to the non-Muslim world that Islam does not allow its adherents to fulfil their civic responsibilities. This contributes to islamophobia!

**(x) Shun forbidding evil.** The Qur'an orders Muslims to "enjoin and promote good and forbid wrong and evil". However, some groups are against half the deen, that is, forbidding wrong. They are influenced by the Western philosophy that criticizing evil to uproot it from the society is "negative" work, therefore, all "negative" work should be avoided. Another term in the West is not to be "judgmental". To be or not to be "judgmental" is a secular term of the West to discourage criticism of any "innovative" thinking or practices. Since secularism has no moral criteria, therefore, nothing can be judged as wrong. Happiest people with the philosophy of not to be "judgmental" are

criminals, fornicators, adulterers, homosexuals, embezzlers, porno-artists, con-artists and people with similar immoral traits. They love not being condemned, rather they love to be praised for what they do as being creative or finders of alternative life style.

In Islam, Allah has given criteria of right and wrong which helps Muslims to determine whether a given thought or practice is a virtue or an evil. Muslims have a duty to promote good and forbid evil. An American cliché is "if you cannot beat them, join them" which goes against Islamic teachings. Islam requires Muslims to work to uproot evil and not become indifferent and complacent. Complacency contributes heavily to islamophobia because in the absence of any rebuttal, protest or corrective action against evil, it gives the appearance of compromise sanctioned by the religion and evil is no longer an evil.

If secular fundamentalists could have their way, they will eliminate all traces of religious morality including the term incest. They desire human beings to live like animals, even worse, because there will be total destruction of the family, no one will know who his/her father is. Right now in America 35% to 70% babies are born out of wedlock and many among them do not know their father. This was not the case only three decades ago. There is hardly any respect for life or property of others - this is the way new generation is being brought up. Teaching morality in the school is strictly forbidden because it is equated with teaching religion. Not making efforts to eliminate evil is like joining evil. This contributes to islamophobia!

(xi) "Negative" work. Some are hung up on "positive work" and "negative work". They consider that any work to expose deceivers and liars who call themselves Muslims is negative work. Perhaps they forget that Abu Bakr Siddique took action against Musailama the Liar at a great cost to Muslim lives; Ali Ibn Abi Talib took action against *Khawarij*; neither of the two were labelled as doing negative work. Throughout Islamic history Muslims have followed the examples of Abu Bakr and Ali and exposed deceivers and liars. They forget that the creed of Islam begins with the word "*La*" meaning no - there is no deity but Allah. The Qur'an has numerous examples of condemning liars and deceivers by name or action. The Prophet called Abul Hakam Amr Ibn Hasham, Abu Jahl which stuck to him. It is the western philosophy of individualism which gave rise to "negative" activity as bad because criticism of evil individuals or groups would be an attack on individual liberty. In Islam, to the best of my understanding, exposure of liars and deceivers is very positive work and it is the fulfillment of *nahi 'an al-munkar* (forbid that is wrong) which is not possible without exposure. If Muslims do not stand against false cults operating in the name of Islam, a false message about Islam is conveyed to the non-Muslims that allows mischief makers to defame Islam in the name of Islam. Real negative work is to ignore Allah's orders and His messenger's sunnah. Compromise with evil is evil which leads to Islamophobia!

(xii) Against the propagation of Islam among non-Muslims. There are groups who are against active da'wah to non-Muslims. Without conveying the message of Islam to non-Muslims, that is, the education of the non-Muslims, we can not expect to uproot prejudices against Islam and Muslims from the world. As it is said that either you are a part of the solution or a part of the problem. The tolerance of islamophobia is a contribution to it.

(xiii) Disputing on scientific facts. This group of Muslims have come up with unscientific reasons to change the direction for *salah* in North America from Northeast to Southeast. This is another ploy of Anti-Islam forces to divide Muslims and the victims are serving the goals of the enemies of Islam. It shows that Muslims cannot even agree on direction, a matter of science not of theology. Similarly, Muslims cannot determine and announce dates of months (Ramadan and Dhul Hijja) and

celebrations (*Eidain*) ahead of time which contributes to islamophobia. Allah declared in the Qur'an, "(He) taught man what he did not know<sup>12</sup>". It is obvious that all true knowledge is from Allah whether given to mankind through the Muslim or non-Muslim researchers. It is, therefore, reasonable to conclude that true and proven knowledge of astronomy and geography is Islamic and its application for the determination of *qiblah* and Islamic calendar is Islamic. Playing with ambiguity when definite knowledge is available, contributes to islamophobia.

**(xiv) Rejecters of Hadith.** Since the days of colonization of Muslim lands by the European powers, there arose a band of people who imitated orientalists and rejected Hadith as a source of Islamic guidance. These people like to call themselves *Ahl al-Qur'an*, but the claim is false and they end up misrepresenting Islamic teachings, in addition to contributing to disunity. Living by half-knowledge of Islam and filling the other half by human intuition cause many missteps. This contributes to islamophobia!

**(xv) Mediocrity.** Islam demands excellence from Muslims and demands the Muslim *Ummah* (community of the believers) to be a role model for mankind<sup>13</sup>. During the early period of Islam, the Muslims were true followers of the Prophet, it is they who became great scientists, innovators of technology and medicine for the world. In our time, Muslim are not leaders in science, technology and knowledge but they have become followers of non-Muslim people. Imitation of the West and living with herd mentality has given Muslims mediocrity and made them corrupt. Mediocrity is un-Islamic. Muslims have left the excellence required by Islam. The situation has gone so bad that the Muslims are not even ashamed of their mediocrity. Some Muslims with doctorate degrees go as far as promoting the idea that scientific research and innovation of technology should be left in the hands of non-Muslims and the Muslims should stay in mosques and *halaqa* of *dhikr* (meditation circles). This contributes heavily to islamophobia!

**(xvi) Terrorism against innocent people.** Islam prohibits violence against those who do not bear arms against the Muslims, unarmed women, old people and children. Suicide under any pretext is forbidden. Islam's method of bringing change is not terrorism but education, motivation and by setting examples. Violent activities of a few under any pretext give reasons for stereotyping to the fools and shrewd enemies of Islam and Muslims. However, it must be recognized that a lot of terrorism is carried out by anti-Islam forces and they frame the Muslims. State terrorism is rampant from Atlantic Ocean to Pacific Ocean, including the State of Israel, all these terrorist states get away with a lot of murder, arson, looting, rape, tearing up bellies of pregnant women, driving people out of their homes and property and bulldozing it and filling up prisons and prison camps in the deserts. It is unconscionable for any Muslim to do any terrorist activity against any unarmed man, women, child or an old person. Islam condemns such acts; "might is right" is an un-Islamic proverb. Terrorism carried out against innocent people, whether by the state or by their opponents contributes to islamophobia.

**(xvii) Tyrants, dictators, and despotic rulers.** Almost all Muslim majority countries are ruled by tyrant dictators (military or civil) or despotic rulers. Almost all such rulers are traitors of their own people because they are serving to the wishes of enemies of Islam and Muslims rather than serving to the cause of Allah. Governments of the West know very well that Muslim majority countries are ruled by their puppets and the best puppets by necessity must be dictators, tyrants and despots. However, masses in the West falsely think that the Islamic form of government must be dictatorial.

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<sup>12</sup> The Qur'an 96:5.

<sup>13</sup> Qur'an 2:143, 3:110 and 22:78.



Conveying the false message that Islam is against representative form of government. This contributes significantly to islamophobia!

**(xviii) Complacency, indifference and apathy.** Muslims have become quite comfortable with islamophobia, they expect it, get angry about it, talk about it, however, they have adapted to it. It is complacency, indifference and apathy which is worse than cowardice. Indifference and complacency goes against the teachings of Islam. Allah says in the Qur'an: *"And whoso defends himself after he has suffered wrong- for such, there is no way (of blame) against them. The way of blame is only against those who oppress mankind, and wrongfully rebel in the earth. For such there is a painful doom."*<sup>14</sup> In the U.S.A. many religious and ethnic communities like Irish, Jews, Italians and African Americans had to live with phobia against them for a while but they did not accept it and they did something about it. The main activism which works is education of the American masses because the media and politicians comply with wishes of the people who express their opinions. Muslims need to understand that ignorance is the mother of prejudice, only education can remove it. Any prejudice is darkness and talking about darkness, getting angry about it would not remove the darkness of ignorance. Education is a light that removes darkness. Complacency, indifference and apathy are heavy contributors to islamophobia!

**(xix) Lack of social activism and suburbia.** Muslims claim that "Islam is the answer". However, Muslims themselves neither take interest nor are they willing to share their resources to improve the lot of oppressed people nor are they willing to stand against oppressors. There are areas of war, poverty and discrimination based on race, color and religion but Muslims are not adequately represented in solving these problems. Not only are the Muslims inadequately active in social and economic activism but they also run away from problem areas and escape to suburbs. Again, it is Muslim's un-Islamic indifference towards social, economic and political problems of the world that is a misrepresentation of Islam. The non-Muslims get the idea that it is not one of Islamic teachings to strive for economic, social and political justice for the oppressed. In the West, social and economic activism is led either by the secularists or the Christians. Muslims' lack of social activism contributes to islamophobia!

**(xx). Oppression of women.** In the sight of Allah, men and women have equal opportunity, equal rewards and equal punishment. In this worldly life men and women have equal rights of education, owning property, balanced share of inheritance and justly balance domestic life. However, Muslim men took away from women what Allah granted them. Suppression and oppression of women contributes to islamophobia.

**(xxi). Implementation of Islamic criminal code (*hudood*) in isolation.** Islamic system (way of life) includes guidelines in the Qur'an and Sunnah about personal life, family life, social life, application of Islamic legal system, economic life and political life. All aspects of Islamic life are interdependent; one will not operate in the absence of the other. If the criminal legal system is imposed before implementing economic system, social system and political system it would not work; it will only promote injustice in the society. An example of this lopsided approach was the implementation of Islamic legal system (*hudood*) during the rule of General Ziaul Haque in Pakistan. This contributes to Islamophobia.

**Muslim reaction to islamophobia:** There are many evil effects of islamophobia on the Muslim minority population in America. For example:

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<sup>14</sup> Qur'an 42:41,42.

1. Some Muslims become resentful and angry towards the attackers and they stereotype and hold their anger against all American people. They develop the image of non-Muslim Americans as unfair, unjust, racist and immoral. This whole thing may develop into bitterness towards the non-Muslim American population.
2. Some Muslims become defensive and defend even criticism of mis-perceived Islam when done rightly. Some Muslims even defend corrupt beliefs and practices developed among Muslims in the later centuries. Some defend corrupt dictators and despotic rulers of Muslim majority countries.
3. Some Muslims isolate themselves from non-Muslim population and develop cocoons around themselves which becomes a barrier in their integration with the American community at large. Such an attitude may affect future generations of American Muslims.
4. Some Muslims develop false sense of persecution on the job, in school and in neighborhood. They begin blaming others for their own shortfalls and failures.
5. A very small minority of Muslims may even become revengeful and may do crazy things. The result will be that the media will stereotype a crazy act of an isolated individual and islamophobia may escalate along with its negative effects on the society.
6. False perceptions of Islam and Muslims cause a great deal of discrimination in housing, jobs, schools, colleges and their acceptance in neighborhoods. Ignorant non-Muslim victims of islamophobia, when they walk by or drive by a Muslim man wearing different looking clothes or a woman wearing head covering, subject him/her to jeering and snide remarks. Even American born Muslim ladies and men have to put up with remarks like "go back to your country!"

**What is the effect of islamophobia on non-Muslim Americans:** The Runnymede Commission has listed the following features of islamophobia<sup>15</sup>:

- "1. Muslim cultures (are) seen as monolithic and unchanging.
2. Claims that Muslim cultures are wholly different from other cultures.
3. Islam (is) perceived as implacably threatening.
4. Claims that Islam's adherents use their faith mainly for political or military advantage.
5. Muslim criticism of Western cultures and societies (are) rejected out of hand.
6. Fear of Islam (is) mixed with racist hostility to immigration.
7. Islamophobia assumed to be natural and unproblematic."

In general, reality is contrary to the perception developed under the influence of islamophobia. Muslim cultures have gone through evolutionary process as other cultures and there are as many Muslim cultures as there are Muslim majority countries. Among immigrants to North America there are vast differences in the culture of the first generation and the second and the third. People in the West perceive that all Muslims or an overwhelming majority of Muslims are Arabs. The fact is that only 15%-18% of Muslims are Arabs and the rest are distributed in non-Arab lands. For example, Indonesia is the largest Muslim majority country. India has the largest Muslim population in a single country but it constitutes, relatively a small minority of Indian population. Indonesia and

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<sup>15</sup> The Runnymede Commission paper, op.cit.

India, each of these countries has Muslim population equal to or larger than total Muslim Arab population of the world.

The West has the perception that Muslims are oppressive to women, all men are polygamous, violence is a way of life, Islam demands or allows dictatorships and it is opposed to "democracy", Islamic Shari'ah has rendered part of the population armless, handless due to their petty crimes and many are hanged or killed for any infraction, Muslims always ride on camels and live in tents. They perceive that the Muslim society is a lawless society. Even in the U.S. many non-Muslims would not enter an Islamic center or a mosque for fear of their lives whereas there has not been a single incidence of violence against a non-Muslim at any Muslim place of gathering. On the other hand there have been hundreds of cases of violence and arson against Muslims and their places of gathering and worship.

**Islam seen as a threat.** Islam is perceived as a threat to world peace. Populations of the West are given to believe that Muslim hordes will win over the West and subjugate the western population to "Islamic", meaning barbaric, rule without liberty or democracy. "Islamic fundamentalism" will subject the world to nuclear wars causing untold death, misery and destruction. It is, therefore, preached that the growth of Islam in the West should not be encouraged, rather it should be suppressed. We are seeing that immigration laws are tailored to fit the agenda against the Muslims. In addition, in case of every terrorist event Muslims become the first suspects even when there is no evidence that any terrorist act took place; the cases in point are TWA flight 800 and the bombing of the Federal building in Oklahoma City. In case of Sudan, there is no evidence of slavery yet the events are mixed with lies and told in a way to give the perception of slavery to generate hate against Islam and Muslims in the minds of ignorant masses world wide. The only crime of Sudanese leadership is that they have declared that they desire to establish an Islamic state; on the other hand Israel, a Jewish religious state is supported, turned into a nuclear power and promoted with a secular country's (the U.S.) taxes. The intelligence community of the West under the leadership of the CIA is busy subverting genuine Islamic movements in all Muslim majority countries; the media and the people of the West support such activities due to prejudices developed through islamophobia. Islam is frequently equated with Nazism, fascism and communism with no grounds to do so. New laws have been passed to enable airport security to harass the Muslims because they are profiled as potential terrorists; having Muslim sounding names or Middle Eastern or South Asian looking faces are enough to be profiled as potential terrorists. Recently the House of Representatives passed, so called, "Freedom from Religious Persecution Act" which is designed to find excuses, under a widest possible pretext, for keeping economic and technological development of the Muslim countries retarded. Muslim countries are left with one of two choices: (a) allowing spies of the West to work unimpeded for espionage work to undermine their economy, sow dissentions, generate political and social unrest, and keep the society unstable, or (b) have economic and technological embargo. Either way destruction of the Muslim country by the hands of the West is assured. Islam, as a total system of a state, has not been in existence anywhere in the world for the last several centuries. Some among Arab states claim that they are Islamic but their claims are false. In reality, they are dictatorships, one way or the other, having a few token elements of Islamic law. Iran has made many claims but there is little evidence of Islamic law in that country. Any terrorist act carried out by anyone with a Muslim sounding name in the world is presumed to have the support of Islamic law. This is precisely islamophobia.

It is a historical fact that Muslim Spain (Andalusia) was a heaven for the Jews and they call it the Golden Period of Judaism. It is a fact that whenever Jews in Europe faced persecution and pogroms they found friendly refuge in Muslim North Africa, the Middle East and the lands ruled by Kilafat

al-Osmania (the Ottoman Empire or Turkey). Now, Islam hating revisionists are trying to rewrite the history to show that the Jews suffered persecutions under the Muslim rule. This is another tactic to arouse hate against Islam in ignorant non-Muslim people.

Cartoons are forceful media to convey a true or a false image. The media in the West is a master of exploiting cartoons against Islam and Muslims. There are numerous degrading cartoons against Islam and Muslims in "respectable" newspapers and magazines. Cartoons are exploited to promote islamophobia.

In America there are discussions about limits of freedom, homosexuality, teen age pregnancies, pornography, AIDS, child molestation, adultery, incest, drunkenness, drug abuse, petty crimes, murders and so on. The Muslim citizens can contribute positively because Muslim culture has traditionally kept all of the evils of the West under tight control and the West can learn a great deal from it. However, Muslims are kept out of such debates and deliberations. Who are the losers? And who are responsible?

Islamophobia in America has become acceptable, if not respectable. Anyone pointing fingers at islamophobia is the one who is targeted and condemned. It is problematic for any one or any newspaper or a magazine to speak from truly a neutral perspective in the matter of Israel and Palestinians. It is even more problematic for non-Muslim journalists to write or say anything in support of Islam, Muslims and Arabs.

The cumulative effect of the works of Secular Fundamentalists, Zionists, Fundamentalist Christians, pseudo-Islamic cults and, in some cases, Muslims themselves, is that the Muslims are despised and demonized which gives legitimacy to harass Muslims at airports. Every Muslim becomes a potential terrorist in the minds of the people, their immigration to the U.S. is discouraged and their petitions for immigration and visa requests are postponed much longer than other people, their complaints of discrimination are ignored. They are targeted by the traffic police and given tickets unnecessarily. The flip side of the coin is that the Muslims living in America develop distaste of the society, therefore, their integration into the American society is hampered. Muslims, under adverse conditions, develop their cocoons within which they live as a community - they live in America yet they are dissociated from it!

**Political and economic opposition and barriers in technology transfer.** In the 20th century two "democratic" states were established based on religion, (1) Pakistan as an Islamic state, and (2) Israel as a Jewish state. Jewish state has enjoyed blind western support, particularly that of the U.S. American tax payers, despite their secular constitution, have been supporting a religious Jewish state established in the heart of the Muslim world and she is receiving 5-6 billion dollars in direct or indirect support annually. On the other hand, there is no other country in free world which has been opposed, like Pakistan. On one hand Pakistan receives a pat on the back in the form of various economic and military loans (deceptively called "aid"). On the other side Pakistan is a spy net of western bought spies to destroy Pakistan from within. Pakistan was broken up into two in 1971 with the collusion of Pakistan's "friends" like spies within, the U.S. and the West, and its enemies like former Soviet Union and India. Now, Pakistan has been readied for some time to break into four. So far only Allah's miracle has been keeping Pakistan intact. Similar conspiracies against the Muslim countries are actively pursued by the West due to islamophobia. Muslim countries are denied nuclear technology whereas the U.S. transferred the same to Israel and India. Since India's explosion of nuclear bombs, there is a demand in the Congress for investigating the transfer of technology to China, a friend of Pakistan and many Muslim majority countries. However, no one is

raising any voice demanding investigation of technology transfer to Israel and India, both, enemies of Pakistan and the Muslim countries. Muslim countries are denied economic, military and technological advancements. It is noteworthy that the people of India and Pakistan are made of the same fabric but India has been aided to become a nuclear, economic and military power to reckon with but Pakistan has been kept weak<sup>16</sup> in every respect. Even Israel is much more powerful than Pakistan. If any Muslim majority country tries to pull ahead of the pack of weak countries, it is bombarded to the stone age; Iraq is a case in point. Whereas Muslims themselves share a majority portion of their backwardness but the western spy network is catalyzing the process of further degeneration and infighting of Muslims and holding back educational, technological, economic and military progress of the majority countries. Why does the American intelligence agencies led by CIA needed 26.5 billion dollars in 1997-98 whereas there is no threat of communism? Removal of islamophobia will help reduce CIA budget.

**Anti-Muslim policies of the U.S. Government are supported:** It is shameful for the West, despite its secular humanist slogans, to support a religious Jewish state of Israel and Hindu partisan government in India but oppose a Muslim majority country, Pakistan. It is the U.S. that transferred the tested nuclear technology to Israel and India but placed an economic and technological embargo on Pakistan and Iraq for developing technology without help from the West. It is shameful indeed! During the bipolar world politics, Pakistan went with the West and took the risk of having Soviet atom bomb carrying missiles targeted towards her. Despite the risks Pakistan took in support of the West, Pakistan was denied help whenever India attacked her three times and finally dismembered the country into two.

It is shameful for the U.S. to conceive world politics around regions of influence and appoint Israel as a regional super power in the Middle East and India in South Asia. There are more than fifty Muslim majority countries but the West could not find one to become a regional super power like India and Israel. It is no less than racial and religious persecution of Islam and Muslims.

It is equally shameful for the Muslim majority countries, particularly for Pakistan, to remain a client of the West despite receiving nothing but rejection, humiliation and disgrace. There may be an element of truth, when someone from the American government saying that Pakistanis will sell their mothers for a price. Shame! Need not get angry, just look at the record of fifty years. The leadership of the Muslim majority countries has been a source of disgrace for Muslims all over the world and islamophobia.

**Uprooting Islam.** There appears to be a long term, well planned, well financed and well coordinated global strategy to fight Islam world-wide, in general, and in the West, in particular. There are reports of anti-Islam conferences and strategy sessions held to defeat Islam as a *deen* and to render it as a personal religion of individuals with no reflection of its teachings in family, social, economic and political life of nations, in the West and in the Muslim majority countries. The West is giving only one choice to the Third World countries, that is, to adopt the kind of Capitalism which benefits the West whether it is under the title of secular democracy or secular dictatorship. There is dichotomy in the meaning of the term "democracy", there is one meaning when applied to the West and a different meaning when applied to the Third World countries where it takes the meaning of

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<sup>16</sup> This is a thorny issue for many self-deceiving and naïve Muslims. Espionage agencies of the enemy countries spend a lot of money buying agents from the natives and guiding them to sabotage the economy, break up the social structure and sow dissension in influential families, (inter and intra) political and religious parties. These espionage agencies use labor unions, sow destructive slogans, impede scientific and technological progress. Enemy countries would not succeed if the Muslims were not weak morally and religiously. However, in the absence of foreign money and guidance of sabotage, the Muslim countries would progress rather than remain in limbo or back sliding.

severely anti-Islamic. True "democracy" in the Muslim majority countries is not tolerated and resources of the West are used to uproot it.

## THE MUSLIM RESPONSE

### **To the Promoters of Islamophobia**

**(A) Secular Fundamentalists:** Islamic minded Muslim intellectuals have a duty to respond to the works of anti-Islam intellectuals, book by book, article by article and idea by idea. Policy makers, in and out of the governments of the West who are victims of anti-Islam intellectuals' writings should have access to Islamic responses before they make their decisions affecting hundreds of millions, if not a billion Muslim lives world-wide. Proactive work of the Muslims should include policy and position papers written by Muslim and non-Muslim scholars and exposure of hypocrisy of Secular Fundamentalists. The Muslim community must establish think tanks and support them.

**(B) Zionist Fundamentalists:** The work of the Zionists need response from the Muslims. Any documentary, any movie with anti-Islam bias must be protested and, if possible, stopped from screening. Similarly, articles published, whether in newspapers or magazines should be responded. In addition, Muslims should develop resources to produce their own documentaries and movies which are truthful and serve the cause of Islam and Muslims. Muslims should organize themselves to be on radio and TV talk shows and work to publish articles by well known western writers providing truth about Islam and Muslims. Muslim community should establish its own radio and TV stations in all major population centers and network them.

**(C) Christian Fundamentalists:** Christian Fundamentalists' hate material does not need response piece by piece because lies and fabrications need no response as publication of a response would provide publicity to the offending party. However, Muslims should study their material and respond to common attacks on Islam. In addition, Muslims should try to get on Christian radio and TV shows to reach the Christian masses with the truth of Islam. Christian Fundamentalists are working very aggressively against Islam through dissemination of lies in their publications, audio and video tapes, radio and TV talk shows and legislative actions. Muslims need to act urgently before it is too late. There is a window of ten to fifteen years before anti-Islam forces put the world of Islam in their vise from all sides and squeeze out the Islamic spirit. If the Muslim community works hard and is able to bring ten million Americans into the fold Islam, it may foil efforts of enemies of Islam. In fact, the vise will become loose and Muslims will open a wider window of opportunity for Islam in America.

**(D) Hindu Fundamentalists.** The best defense is the offense, that is, Muslims should obtain education and training in the news and entertainment media and get into it for influencing correct policies. In addition, Muslim billionaires like The Saudi prince Walid bin Talal ibn Saud should enter the business of media ownership at any level and influence the policies. Muslims living in the West must pool their resources for buying the media outlets.

**(E) The Slavs.** The best strategy is to have active Da'wah programs in the Slavic countries. In addition, buying the media in the Slavic countries for the dissipation of correct knowledge about Islam and the Muslim world. This is a challenge to the Muslims all over.

**Defensive work.** Muslims are under attack on the job, in the media, in schools and other such places. Muslims have to use constitutional methods of protest, education and legal recourse to obtain justice against the offenders. There is only one Islamic organization doing excellent job in this area and deserves Muslim support. This organization is CAIR<sup>17</sup> in Washington, D.C. We need more organizations working in tandem or in cooperation with CAIR at state and local levels.

**MuslimNet.** Muslim community in the U.S. must establish fast communication networks, branched out like a tree to be able to reach one million active Muslims overnight. Call it **MuslimNet**. The MuslimNet will connect one million Muslim homes through telephone, Email and Fax. As soon as the leadership of Muslims decides to take an action against an offender each member of the national leadership committee (5 to 10 persons) will take the agreed upon action and call ten assigned persons each and ask for repeat of the action of the first level. Each receiver of the message would take requested action and call ten additional assigned persons and convey the same message and so on. Thus the message will propel through phone, Email and Fax. In this way a million Muslims can be reached overnight. The result will be clogging up the phones, Fax machines and computers of the offending parties. The cost will be distributed over all participants because each one uses his own time and pays his own phone bill. In a democracy only the active citizens' voice counts and those who are in slumber or living in their complacency and indifference are ignored like cattle or may even be slaughtered. Proactive work goes hand in hand with appropriate and sane reaction against offenses.

**Proactive work.** This is mainly education of the American leadership and some political lobbying at all levels including the Federal, state and local levels. In addition, Muslims should participate politically through a party of their choice, support or oppose candidates as the case may be; negotiate and bargain with the political candidates. Muslims must do their own voter registration drives, prepare voter lists, make political bloc on issues of their interest, help elect their candidates and defeat those who take stand in support of anti-Islam and anti-Muslim forces. All this kind of work is led by political lobby organizations. Muslims also need Political Action Committees (PAC) for fund raising and channeling funds to the candidates of their choice. Muslims have just begun in this area and all such organizations are new to show any achievements; we have organizations like United Muslims of America (UMA), Pakistan American Congress (PAC), American Muslim Council (AMC) and American Muslim Alliance (AMA). Recently, a new organization was established by some prominent American leaders to educate leaders about Islam, Muslims, Arabs and the Muslim world. It is Council for the National Interest Foundation<sup>18</sup> (CNIF).

**Education of the non-Muslim People.** The Muslim Education Trust<sup>19</sup> has placed the emphasis on education in the following words:

"Education is the process which develops the human faculties to face all life situations. It is the means by which human beings counter ignorance - ignorance that can breed oppression, hatred, prejudice and discrimination. Education builds

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<sup>17</sup> Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR), 1050 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 490, Washington, D.C. 20036. Phone (202) 659-2247, Fax (202) 659-2254, Email: [cairl@ix.netcom.com](mailto:cairl@ix.netcom.com), URL: [www.cair-net.org](http://www.cair-net.org) Nihad Awad, Director General

<sup>18</sup> Council for the National Interest Foundation (CNIF), 1511 K Street, N.W., Suite 1043, Washington, D.C. 20005. Phone: (202) 628-6962, Fax: (202) 628-6958, Email: [count@igc.apc.org](mailto:count@igc.apc.org)

<sup>19</sup> Ghulam Sarwar, "The Response of the Education Trust" to the Consultation Paper on Islamophobia: its features and dangers, page 1. The Education Trust, 130 Stroud Green Road, London N4 3RZ

understanding and bridges the gaps between different faiths, cultures and societies, thus helping to bring about a decent, healthy, peaceful and a prosperous world where equality, justice, fairness and access to opportunities are ensured."

The Muslim responses should include reactive responses and proactive work. Very importantly, Muslims have a duty to spread the true knowledge and appreciation of Islam to the non-Muslim masses. Muslims have to develop a vision of their own, develop projects of reaching out to the masses and touching everyone with the message of Islam. Ignorance is darkness, ignorance is the mother of prejudice; only knowledge can remove ignorance as the Qur'an declares, *"And say: The truth has come and the falsehood has vanished; surely the falsehood is a vanishing (thing)"* Al-Isra 17:81. When there is darkness, criticizing it, talking about it will never bring light; there must be a source of light such as a candle or electric light. Knowledge is that light.

Anti-Islam demagogues are busy doing their work with their own vision of the world without Islam. They have the resources, manpower, plans and strategies. Muslims are living in their own apathy, indifference, complacency, lack of vision, lack of plans and lack of any strategies. Muslims are challenged to recognize their duty to Allah for the sake of themselves, their progeny and their lives hereafter. Muslims have a limited number of choices: (a) propagate Islam and enlighten the world, (b) leave Islam in practice and become hypocrites, or (c) remain Muslims but do nothing and be slaughtered like cattle. If the Muslims do act the way they are supposed to, they can become a power to be reckoned with.

**Muslim vision in America**<sup>20</sup>. It is proposed that Muslim leaders in America put their heads together, develop a vision of America from the Muslim eyes for twenty years, fifty years and one-hundred years from now. A vision must be translated into a workable real project and the entire Muslim population should be educated, motivated and mobilized to work to realize this vision. Let the Muslim community begin with a modest vision of removing the negative image of Islam and prejudices against the Muslims in America by the year 2010.

**Correction of school text books.** American schools use humanities text books which contain subtle and not so subtle anti Islam poison. This material must be removed but it cannot be done without the cooperation of various education boards and commissions and text book publishers. Council on Islamic Education<sup>21</sup> has already started this work and has many good achievements which can serve as guide for those who desire to duplicate similar work in other states in the U.S.. Correction of school text books should receive top priority in the work to remove islamophobia from America.

**What schools can do.** Again quoting Ghulam Sarwar<sup>22</sup>

"Schools must familiarize themselves with the issue of islamophobia, and tackle it with the same determination with which they would face racial discrimination. Listening sympathetically to the views of Muslim pupils and parents, and respecting their religious needs and sensibilities, is vital if islamophobia is to be addressed

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<sup>20</sup> See two papers by M. Amir Ali, (1) ISLAM IN AMERICA: A Proposal for a Planned Growth, presented at Second Annual Conference on ISLAM IN AMERICA, held in Chicago, July 3-5, 1998, and (2) THE VISION, a paper published by the Institute of Islamic Information & Education. See footnote #2 for address.

<sup>21</sup> Council on Islamic Education, P.O. Box 20186, Fountain Valley, CA 92728, Shabbir Mansouri, Director General. Send for their catalogue and order form. The Council has published books, "10 STEPS FOR TEACHING ABOUT ISLAM AND MUSLIMS", "TEACHING ABOUT ISLAM AND MUSLIMS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL CLASSROOM" and others. Phone: (714) 839-2929, Fax: (714) 839-2714.

<sup>22</sup> Ghulam Sarwar, op.cit.



seriously. Teachers should find out about the religious needs of their Muslim pupils and try to ensure that they are met in their schools. They should not assume that Islamic requirements are unreasonable or unimportant."

Council on Islamic Education<sup>23</sup> has published guidelines for handling American Muslim students in public and private schools. Local Islamic organizations and parents of the Muslim students should purchase copies from Council on Islamic Education and provide copies at no cost to schools and teachers in the U.S.. Federal government, State governments and school districts can share the responsibility of taking initiative of the publication and distribution of guidelines for teachers or distribute publications of the Council on Islamic Education for handling American Muslim students.

**What the media can do:** Quoting below Professor Gordon Conway<sup>24</sup>, Chairman, Runnymede Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia. I have inserted square parenthesis to make his statement relevant to our country. The conditions for Muslims in America are just as bad as in U.K.

"If you doubt whether islamophobia exists in Britain [American], I suggest you spend a week reading, as I have done, a range of national and local papers. If you look for articles which refer to Muslims or to Islam you will find prejudiced and antagonistic comments, mostly subtle but sometimes blatant and crude. Where the media lead, many will follow. British [American] Muslims suffer discrimination in their education and in workplace. Acts of harassment and violence against Muslims are common."

**Demonizing Muslims.** It is grossly unfair and unjust to demonize a community belonging to, the fourteen-centuries old, religion of Islam. Islam is the religion which is claimed to be the fastest spreading in the U.S., it cannot be a religion of demons. The condemnation of Muslims in America is the condemnation of whites, blacks and Spanish American who embrace Islam. About two thirds of new converts to Islam are women, a majority among them are white; are they all insane or stupid? Using the First Amendment rights of the freedom of press for attacking 5-9 million (and increasing) American citizens is unconscionable. If anything, Islam and Muslim does not get fair and adequate representation in the media. Islam is not a religion totally alien to America; Islam arrived in this continent with the arrival of African people who were free but forcefully enslaved by the European and American slave traders.

**An act by a "Muslim" is not necessarily an act approved by Islam.** A wrong done by a "Muslim" should not be stereotyped and labeled as a Muslim act or an Islamic trait. The acts of Timothy McVeigh are never labeled as the act of a Christian or an act derived from Christian teachings. David Koresh did what he did under the name of Christianity yet it was not labeled as a Christian act. There are over a million convicted criminals in the American prison system and a majority of them came from Christian families and have Christian names yet their acts are not labeled as acts of Christians or a Christian act. Open an American newspaper, turn on a TV talk show such as Geraldo, Ricky Lake, Jenny Jones, Jerry Springier, Sally Jessey Raphael and others and find cases of women abuse, incest and weird stuff by the tons yet no one labels them as acts of Christians, Jews, secularists or atheists - they are seen as evil acts by individuals. However, when a Muslim does some wrong it is labeled as an act of a Muslim, worse yet, it carries the connotation of being derived from Islamic teachings. It is grossly unjust on the part of the media to defame Islam

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<sup>23</sup> Council on Islamic Education, op.cit.

<sup>24</sup> Gordon Conway, Chairman, Runnymede Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia in the Consultation Paper, Preface, op.cit.

and Muslims. The media has the responsibility to develop general guidelines for self regulation. At this time we do not propose any legislation to stop islamophobia in the media. The media should appoint Muslim journalists in their staff and provide them with full opportunities of participation. In addition, non-Muslim journalists need to learn about Islam and Muslims and they should receive some sensitivity training.

**Need for legislative reforms.** The Federal government, State and local governments need to expand laws already in the books to include Islam as one of the American religions, recognize Islamic holidays and require schools and employers to accommodate clothing requirements of Muslims, particularly, women. Also, attacks on Muslims and their mosques and places of gathering must be protected as other religious centers, such as, churches and synagogues, are protected. Muslims are required to pray five times a day, two or three prayers may fall during the working hours. Since each prayer last for only five to ten minutes, Muslim employees should be allowed to use a part of their lunch hour or coffee break time for their prayers. The American laws should protect the Muslims who want to practice their religion with respect to their attire, prayers, food and holidays.

**Outline of a Project for Outreach<sup>25</sup>.** In the U.S. there are 260 million people which includes six million Muslims. With good planning, organization and hard work it should be possible to mobilize one million Muslims to work for conveying the message of Islam to non-Muslims. In case of mobilization of one million Muslim workers' each such worker would have to reach 260 persons over a period of ten years or 26 persons per year or one family per month. This should not be too much work for the sake of Allah and the Muslim community. From our experience in the field of reaching out to non-Muslims we have found that it takes approximately five dollars to reach one person. The cost, therefore would be \$5.00 x 26 persons per year equals \$130.00 per year or \$11.00 per month which every Muslim should be able to afford. Every Islamic organization in the U.S. should have a strong committee for outreach to non-Muslims; collect \$11.00 per month or \$130.00 per year from each member of the local Muslim community for outreach to the non-Muslims, organize the project and implement it. There are a lot of details which need to be filled in. The III&E, the publisher of this paper, can provide help.

**People are the rulers in a secular democracy.** The media and politicians are, in general, followers of the public opinion. Until recently there was an absence of Muslims from the West. The media and politicians had one-thousand years of free time, without opposition or resistance against the promotion of islamophobia. But now, the Muslims are in the West and they must take charge of positive work for Islam and in the interest of Muslims and strive to change the public opinion. Initially, Muslims would have hard time getting media support but after some work the media will fall in line with the Muslims. There will be many difficulties in the beginning but they will vanish gradually as Allah has promised that there is ease after difficulty<sup>26</sup>.

## AGAINST THE CONTRIBUTORS OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

**Exposure of Pseudo-Islamic Cults.** Muslims have a duty to identify pseudo-Islamic cults, explain their non-Islamic traits, isolate them and get the acceptance that they should not be labelled as Muslims. Disowning is the process of removing the drag and the hurdle of pseudo-Islamic cults in

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<sup>25</sup> M. Amir Ali, Ph.D., "ONE FAMILY A MONTH: REACHING OUT FOR OUR SECURITY AND HUMANITY", a proposal presented at the "Two Day Seminar on the Future of Muslims in America: Requisite of Dignified Presence", held October 18-19, 1997 at East West University, 816 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60605, U.S.A.

<sup>26</sup> The Qur'an 94:5-6.

the work for Islam. It requires publication of books and brochures about these cults. If these cults go by false Islamic names we should give them un-Islamic names befitting their traits, publicize such names until they are identified by the name given to them by the Muslim community. One good example is that of Farrakhanism which calls itself "the Nation of Islam". The name Farrakhanism is becoming acceptable and people are beginning to recognize this cult by the name given by us. The proactive work in this field would be to promote the understanding and appreciation of Islamic beliefs and practices to contrast with pseudo-Islamic cults. As people begin to learn beliefs and practices of true Islam and develop its appreciation they would reject cults. This is very positive work. Protection of the Muslim community from defamation by the false cults is indeed positive work because it falls under the Qur'anic injunction of forbidding *evel, nahi 'an al-munkar*<sup>27</sup>.

### **The Muslims at the Margin.**

Again education is the process. Twenty-one traits of "the Muslims at the Margin" have been listed above which represent various individuals and groups of Muslims who contribute to islamophobia. It is the irony of our time that new converts (or reverts) to Islam start their knowledge of Islam at a higher level than an overwhelming majority of those who were born of Muslim parents. A convert to Islam begins his life in Islam generally at the zero level of Islamic knowledge, whereas a Muslim born of Muslim parents starts at a negative level. What is a negative knowledge? Any belief a Muslim claims or an action which he carries out under the label of "Islamic" but has no proof in the Qur'an or Hadith, is hearsay and all hearsay "knowledge" is negative. The task of a reformer is to remove all hearsay knowledge from such a Muslim before replacing it with correct beliefs and deeds which is more difficult than teaching a new Muslim. A person born in Islam is generally resistant to giving up his false beliefs and un-Islamic deeds which he has seen his family and society holding as Islamic. The path of least resistance, in terms of time, effort and money is to concentrate on our youth and try to propagate Islam among the non-Muslims. This will create an environment for older, born in Islam Muslims to reconsider their inherited beliefs and practices, and some may come to Islam of Qur'an and Sunnah rather than hanging on to their cultural Islam.

**Judization and Christianization of Islam.** A reformer's task is to move people away from hearsay and re-attach them to the Qur'an and Sunnah directly. It is not an easy task because people have been given to believe that their hearsay knowledge was derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah by the wise imams of the past and it is the truth carved in stone to last forever. This is exactly the Judization of Islam. Jews are being told that scholars of the past have derived the truth from the Torah, teachings of Moses and a succession of scholarly Rabbis who put it in **Talmud**. The job of ordinary Jews is to live by the Talmudic teachings and recite Torah only for the blessings. Likewise, the Muslims are told to choose a **Fiqh** and live by it but recite the Qur'an for the blessings only. Muslims are discouraged from studying the Qur'an and Hadith because these two sources of Islam are assumed to be too complicated for ordinary Muslims. Discouraging ordinary Muslims from the study of the Qur'an and Hadith goes against the teaching of the Qur'an. The Qur'an is explicit, "*Praise be to Allah who has revealed the Book unto His slave, and has not placed therein any crookedness*<sup>28</sup>" and "*And recite that which has been revealed to you of the Book of your Lord. There none who can change His words, and you will not find refuge beside Him.*<sup>29</sup>" Allah places emphasis on the simplicity of the Qur'an and asks to ponder over the Qur'an: "*And We have indeed made the Qur'an easy to understand and remember: Then is there any that will receive admonition?*<sup>30</sup>" At one place in the Qur'an Allah challenges people to understand the Qur'an

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<sup>27</sup> See verses of the Qur'an 3:104, 110 & 114; 5:79; 7:157; 9:67, 71 & 112; 16:90; 22:41; 24:21; 29:45; 31:17.

<sup>28</sup> The Qur'an 18:1

<sup>29</sup> The Qur'an 18:27.

<sup>30</sup> The Qur'an 54:17, 22, 32 and 40.

because He has placed no locks on their hearts: “Do they not then earnestly seek to understand the Qur’an, or are their hearts locked up by them?”<sup>31</sup>”

Any learned person in Islam knows that some *fiqhi* opinions are based on misinterpretations of the Qur’an and/or weak *ahadith* whereas sound *ahadith* are available against them. In some *fiqhi* opinions there are genuine differences which are difficult to understand for an uninitiated Muslim. However, the Qur’an is an easy enough source for every one to derive guidance from according to his own education and intellectual level. A person of little learning can gain from the Qur’an what is necessary for him, whereas, a philosopher gains what he needs and both can enjoy the Book.

The Christians have many perceived saints who are appointed; generally, a committee of church leaders decides who is a saint. Christians pray to saints or pray to God through perceived saints. Muslims have followed the same path in a worse manner. There are caretakers of graves or mausoleums of perceived saints who do the publicity and public relations work for the saint and people begin to pray to "Muslim" saints or pray to God through these saints. Only Allah knows who is a saint (*wali-Allah*) and who is a devil. Development of sainthood is Christianization of Islam. The concept of infallibility of any human being after the Prophet Muhammad<sup>(S)</sup> and blind following of teachings of any such people is alien to Islam.

Allah required Muslims to pray to Him directly, obey Him and His Last Messenger. We can see that the prophecy of the Prophet Muhammad has come true that the Muslims will imitate the ways of the people of the book. These are only two among many examples of the imitation of the Christians and the Jews. The Muslims have taken teachings from Hindus, Majusis, Buddhists and tradition-based religions and incorporated them into their "Islam", since such beliefs and practices entered among Muslims centuries ago, the Muslims began to believe them to be Islamic teachings. These problems arose because of detaching Muslims from the STUDY of the Qur’an and Hadith. In their daily lives Muslims do not use Qur’an and Sunnah as the criterion of Islamic and non-Islamic but hearsay traditions passed on to them through generations like any other religion. Islam is the only religion in the world for which original teachings are available for the true follower. The Qur’an and Sunnah are easily accessible to know the Islamic and un-Islamic beliefs and practices and differentiate them from the traditions of their forefathers or the community. There is no doubt about the sincerity of Muslims of our time and their commitment to live by Islam but they have been removed away from the original foundation left by the Last Prophet. A few specific suggestions are given below for the reform of the Muslims.

**1. Educate the educated**<sup>32</sup>. This is the age of college and university degrees and the leadership is in the hands of degree holding technocrats and politicians. The West has taken over the entire education system of the world and produced anti-God, anti-religion and "liberal" technocrats and politicians and giving them the power to run Muslim majority countries as well as others. Truly, the Islamic leadership must wake up to this reality and begin to re-educate in Islam our educated elite. Muslim technocrats and politicians are tired of the bickering between our religious leaders and they are running away from Islam. The only solution I can see is to turn them towards the study of the Qur’an and Hadith by themselves, live by what they understand and ignore bickering of *'ulama*. Our *'ulama* have a place in the society, that is to answer questions about the understanding of the Qur’an and Hadith when they are asked, but not to impose their opinions (*fiqhi* rulings) upon the people

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<sup>31</sup> The Qur’an 47:24

<sup>32</sup> See two papers by M. Amir Ali Ph.D., (a) THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT, and (b) ISLAMIC TRAINING PROGRAM, both are published by the Institute of Islamic Information & Education.

under any pretext. We can classify our educated under three groups, namely, (a) college and university graduates, (b) high school graduates, and (c) those with some school education. Among the Muslims there is a large fourth group of illiterates.

Illiterate people follow those who are perceived to be literate and economically living better than the illiterates. If perceived literates are educated in Islam it becomes a *de facto* education of illiterates. *Madhhab* of an illiterate is the *madhhab* of a literate person. A person of low literacy follows a person of higher literacy. The job of a reformer is to reach out to all the people at their own level, therefore, it is a challenge to the Islamic leadership to devise plans and methods to educate all sections of the Muslim society in Qur'an and Sunnah and reattach the *Ummah* to the original sources of Islamic guidance.

Those who are college and university graduates should be guided and motivated to study at least one modern *tafseer* of the Qur'an and study one major secondary collection of Hadith<sup>33</sup>, such as, *Riadus Saliheen* or *Mishkat al-Masabih*. Those non-Arab Muslims with high school education should be motivated to study at least one translation of the Qur'an. Muslim Arabs should be motivated to study the Arabic language and elevate themselves enough so that they can understand fairly well what they read and they should study at least one *tafseer* and one major secondary Hadith collection. Those who are not even high school graduates should be motivated to study what they can; Qur'an and Hadith classes should be arranged for them. Unfortunately, in our time an overwhelming majority of so called scholars are story-teller entertainers rather than teachers of the Qur'an and Hadith. These entertainers who come with the title of scholars narrate unsubstantiated stories and frequently base their talks on matters taken from weak and fabricated *ahadith*, people's dreams and hearsay experiences. Islam is not based on unsubstantiated stories, weak and fabricated *ahadith*, people's dreams and their personal experiences, even for moral teachings and/or bringing people to remember Allah (*dhikr-Allah*). The truth cannot be established on false foundation. It would be a false allegation against Allah and His Messenger that they did not leave enough true teachings for the motivation of the believers and the leadership has to resort to weak and fabricated *ahadith*, mythologies, experiences, and dreams of fallible people and unsubstantiated fantastic stories from mythological fables of the old. In our time, among so called "Islamic scholars" there are more story-teller entertainers than real scholars and teachers of the Qur'an and Sunnah. These fake scholars love to tell fables and stories, many fictional and unfounded, even when teaching *tafseer of the Qur'an* and giving lessons in Hadith. *Audhu bi-Allah*.

Fortunately, the Muslim community in America has a large number of "educated" professionals with doctorate degrees but, unfortunately, they are ignorant of Islamic knowledge. They have proven intelligence of high caliber but they are too happy to leave the religious leadership in the hands of people of lower intellectual caliber. If these professionals spend a little time, regularly, in the study of the Qur'an and Hadith they will gain a lot more knowledge and wisdom which is rare in the people with Islamic studies degrees only, whether from traditional institutions of the East or modern universities of the West. As Ibn Qayyim is reported to have said that none can be an Islamic scholar unless he has mastered all sciences. Alas! We have *muftis* who have no knowledge or

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<sup>33</sup> It is recommended to classify Hadith collections as primary and secondary. The primary Hadith collections are those collected by the early *muhadditheen* (specialists of Hadith sciences) who traveled the lands, heard personally each Hadith from the narrator, examined the Hadith *isnad* (chain or narrators) and *matn* (text) on the criteria developed by them and decided to accept or reject for their collections. Bukhari, Muslim Tirmidhi, Abu Dawood are examples of primary Hadith collections. Secondary Hadith collections consist of *Ahadith* (plural of Hadith) culled from primary collections and arranged topic-wise by the *muhadditheen* of the later period. *Riadus Saliheen*, *Mishkat al-Masabih* and *Buloogh al-Maram* are examples of secondary Hadith collections. There are many major secondary Hadith collections and many minor (containing 200 or fewer *Ahadith*) Hadith collections translated and available in the market.

appreciation of the Islamic sciences of medicine, mathematics, chemistry, physics, biology, astronomy, geography, engineering, electronics and others. They are too happy in riding or driving a car yet quick in condemning modern sciences and denigrate professionals who designed and built that car. We are loaded with ignorant *muftis*.

**2. Education of beliefs and good works.** The Qur'an is replete, over seventy times<sup>34</sup>, with phrases *aaminoo wa 'amiluss-saalihat* meaning "believe and do good works" demonstrating the importance and significance of knowing their meaning. The whole Qur'an and teachings of the Prophet are the sources of knowing beliefs and good works. If people are detached from the Qur'an and Hadith they cannot find out explanations of beliefs and good works. Living by hearsay is the source of corruption of Islamic beliefs.

**3. Understanding the meaning of "obey Allah and obey the Messenger".** Another oft-repeated injunction of the Qur'an is *ati'u-Allaha wa ati'ur-Rasool* meaning obey Allah and obey the Messenger. This does not include blind obedience of anyone else except within the obedience of Allah and His Messenger. Blind obedience of any religious scholar has been equated with taking such a person as Lord besides Allah<sup>35</sup>. It means any religious scholar or a leader has the responsibility of conveying the Qur'an and Hadith but not imposing his opinion upon the people. On the other hand people have a right to demand from a leader or a religious scholar to produce evidence from the Qur'an and Hadith for anything they may utter in the matter of religion. A true scholar will naturally feel pride and pleasure in giving proof from the Qur'an and Hadith whereas fake scholars will feel insulted when asked to give proof. In the matter of religion anything not found in the Qur'an and Hadith is opinion and such opinions may be rejected and no one should feel insulted when his opinion is not given any weight. At one place the Qur'an mentions the matter of obedience to, *wa ouli al-amr minkum*<sup>36</sup> meaning, "and those among you who are in authority" and another place *wa ouli al-amr minhum*<sup>37</sup> meaning, "and those who are in authority among them". The context of these verses is, when a dispute arises among the believers, refer the matter to the Messenger to resolve your dispute and in his absence take the matter to the Messenger's appointed ruler, governor or the commander. Firstly, these verses apply to those who have reigns of power and they must be living people. Secondly, their obedience is within the obedience of Allah and His Messenger. Those who are dead are neither among us nor they have reigns of power. Even a living scholar who is not head of a state has no authority over the people; he can only recommend and advise people about a matter of Islamic ruling quoting the the Qur'an and Hadith..

#### **4. Understanding the Meaning of "fas'alou ahl-adh-dhikr".**

This small phrase of the Qur'an has been exploited by the leaders of the *deen* and blindly accepted by the ignorant Muslim masses. The phrase appears in the Qur'an in two places and has a context. Let us look at it carefully. Allah Says in the Qur'an:

*"And We sent not (as Our messengers) before you other than men whom we inspired. Ask ahl-adh-dhikr [the followers of Remembrance or Reminder] if you know not – with clear proofs and writings. And We have revealed to you adh-dhikr [the Remembrance or Reminder] that you may explain to you to mankind that which has been revealed for them, and that haply they may refelect.<sup>38</sup>"*

<sup>34</sup> For example see the Qur'an: 2:82, 277; 3:57; 4:122, 173; 5:9; 7:42; 18:30, 107; 24:38, 55; and 29:7, 9:58.

<sup>35</sup> The Qur'an 9:31.

<sup>36</sup> The Qur'an 4:59.

<sup>37</sup> The Qur'an 4:83.

<sup>38</sup> The Qur'an 16:43-44.

*“And We sent not (as our messengers) before you other than men whom We inspired. Ask ahl-adh-dhikr [the followers of Remembrance or Reminder] if you know not<sup>39</sup>”.*

It is obvious from the context, when Allah mentioned in the Qur'an about people of the past and revelations given by Allah to them, He is asking them to go and ask your own rabbis and priests about this matter. This is a question of historical events not of theology. The Muslims have known that the Books of the Christians and the Jews, called the Bible, has been corrupted. Yet some content of the revealed guidance to the prophets of the old time is there and confirms the revelations given to Prophet Muhammad<sup>(S)</sup>. It is wrong to interpret this phrase of the Qur'an as authority for issuing fallible human opinions (*fatawa*). The phrase “*fas'alou ahl-adh-dhikr*” may be extended to mean, ask those who know more than you or ask those who are specialists in the subject matter you are inquiring about. In this case those who are asked have the responsibility to give quotes from the Qur'an and Hadith only and give the meaning when required. This author finds no authority for issuing fallible human rulings (*fatawa*) and making it binding upon the *Ummah*. If Muslims give such an authority of issuing *fatawa* to the “Islamic scholars” which Allah has not given them, the Muslims run into at least three problems: (1) the Muslims do not know who are real scholars and who are charlatans, (2) some “scholars” have a price and they can be bought and sold in the open market – rulers can use them for their own purposes and fool the masses, and (3) the Muslim have the potential of being enslaved by the charlatans appearing in “scholarly robes”. Besides, these “scholars” themselves resist accepting other specialists in other fields, such as, astronomy for determining dates for beginning of the months.

**5. Significance of enjoining good and forbidding evil.** Another oft-repeating injunction of the Qur'an is *amr bil-ma'roof wa nahi 'an al-munkar*, meaning, "enjoin good and forbid evil". This injunction must be implemented in its totality otherwise it loses its effectiveness. People who order others to stop evil are more likely to be conscious of not doing evil themselves. The converse is true too, that is, those who do not order others to stop evil, themselves may be involved in evil. Similarly, those who enjoin others to do good are likely to do good themselves. The Qur'an is not a book to pick and choose from but this is a book to be implemented in its totality. Allah says those who pick and choose are going to be disgraced in this life and there is a painful punishment in the life hereafter<sup>40</sup>.

**6. Significance of Allah saying that He has completed your deen.**

Allah says in the Qur'an *al-yaoma akmaltu lakum deenakum wa atmamtu 'alaykum ni'mati*, meaning, "this day have I perfected your deen for you and completed My favor unto you<sup>41</sup>". This means that Allah has completed His orders with respect to ways of worship (*ibadat*), unlawful things (*haram*), crimes and their prescribed punishment (*hudood*) and other necessary guidance. After this revelation no one is authorized to invent new methods of worshipping, remembering and pleasing Allah. There can be no additions to unlawful (*haram*) things or similar matters. It means that a Muslim may ask the question what is *haram* because *haram* is explicitly given by Allah and His Messenger and whatever is not explicitly *haram* is *halal*. The proof of *haram* must come in clear words from the Qur'an and Hadith and no opinions in this matter are acceptable. Round about *ta'weel* is not acceptable, either. When Allah said, *Inna Nahnu nazzalna adh-dhikra wa Inna lahu la-hafidhoon*<sup>42</sup>, meaning, "Lo! We, even We, reveal the Dhikr, and lo! We surely are its Guardian". Throughout the Islamic history there is a consensus of Islamic scholars that the *dhikr* in this verse

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<sup>39</sup> The Qur'an 21:7.

<sup>40</sup> The Qur'an 2:85.

<sup>41</sup> The Qur'an 5:3.

<sup>42</sup> The Qur'an 15:9.

means Islamic guidance and Islamic *shari'ah*. When Allah has declared that He is the Guardian then how it is possible that He will leave the matter of *haram* and *halal* vague for us to resort to indirect *ta'weel*. The verses of the Qur'an 5:3 and 15:9 render void any new additions to the list of *haram* and any additions and innovations in methods of worship, *dhikr*, celebrations and any major *hudood*, punishment for a crime. It is a stupid question to ask, is it *halal*? Everything is *halal* if not explicitly *haram*.

## 7. End the dichotomy of sciences<sup>43</sup>

In the recent centuries Muslim scholars, due to their own ineptness, divided knowledge artificially into worldly (*dunyawi*) and religious (*deeni*). Allah says in the Qur'an '*allamal-insana ma lam ya'lam*<sup>44</sup>', meaning, "*He (Allah) taught man what he knew not*". It is obvious that all true and proven knowledge was revealed to mankind by Allah, however, theories in every scientific field will remain in suspension until proven correct. After all many *fiqhi* opinions are theories, some of them are surely false because two opposites cannot be true. For example, wiping over the socks for *wudu*, pronouncement of three divorces at once. Do we throw away whole science of *fiqh* because a few opinions are contradictory? Similarly, just because a few scientific theories have been proven wrong we cannot throw away all sciences as worldly or doubtful and take everything worldly as worthless while enjoying their fruit ourselves. It is, therefore, correct to conclude that all true and proven knowledge was revealed to mankind by Allah and these are Islamic sciences. It is an error to exclude natural and social sciences from Islamic sciences. It is, therefore, necessary to include natural and social sciences as a part of *deeni* curriculum and those specializing in any of the natural or social sciences must be taught Qur'an and Sunnah. Also, it implies that the use of physical sciences for the determination of qiblah, Islamic calendar and dates of celebrations is correct. Let the religious scholars give the criteria and physical science scholars must provide the answer. Islam is not a religion of ambiguity and all ambiguities should be removed using Allah-given knowledge to mankind.

I urge Muslim educators everywhere to require some study of natural and social sciences for all Islamic studies students and some study of Qur'an and Hadith for all those who are specializing in any of the natural and social sciences. I assume that Islamic studies means mainly the study of the Qur'an and Hadith sciences, the Arabic language and languages of the Muslims.

## 8. The slogan of the unity of Muslims

Ordinary but sincere Muslims' emotions for unity are exploited by charlatans for developing a following or some other worldly purposes. In fact unity is a gift from Allah, He gives unity to the deserving people. The Muslims should return to the Qur'an and Sunnah in beliefs and practices to make themselves worthy of the gift of unity from Allah. Allah emphasizes the point that only Allah unites people but none can unite them even if he spends all treasures of the world. Allah reminds his chosen Messenger: "*And He (Allah) has put affection between their hearts; not if you had spent all that is in the earth, could you have produced that affection, but has done it, for He is Mighty and Wise*<sup>45</sup>." And another place in the Qur'an He says, "*And hold fast all together, by the Rope of Allah (Allah's revealed guidance) and be not divided among yourselves. And remember with gratitude*

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<sup>43</sup> For more discussion on this topic see the paper by M. Amir Ali, "The Integration of Islamic Sciences with Natural and Social Sciences: A Necessity for the Growth of Muslims" presented at the Fiftieth Anniversary of Pakistan Conference held at SUNY College, Brockport, NY on November 28-30, 1997.

<sup>44</sup> The Qur'an 96:5.

<sup>45</sup> The Qur'an 8:63.



*Allah's favor on you; for you were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His Grace, you became brethren. And you were on the brink of the pit of fire, and He saved you from it. Thus Allah makes His signs clear to you: That you may be guided<sup>46</sup>.*"

Naturally, holding conferences and seminars for unity or making organizations for unity are worthless pursuits. The only thing Muslims can do is to live by the Qur'an and Sunnah and keep recruiting people whether born within or without a Muslim family for living by the Qur'an and Sunnah; Allah by His Grace and Mercy will bring all Muslims together. Let us not be fooled by charlatans in the name of unity; their conferences are essentially recruitment drives to enslave naïve Muslims. These charlatans who hold Unity Conferences are experts in keeping their followers ignorant and shielding them from the truth and knowledge of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

### **9. Need for a diversity of professions**

Muslims, particularly those coming from the Indo-Pak Subcontinent have doctor-engineer mania. For some there is no other profession to pursue except medicine or engineering whereas there are hundreds of other professions which provide a comfortable life style. The Muslim community in America and other Muslim minority countries need people in a variety of professions. The Muslim community needs Muslim lawyers, journalists, economists, experts in finance and industry, business management, politics, entertainment industry, TV and radio, newspaper column writers, fiction writers to name a few. Another field where the Muslims are completely absent is "occidentalism", meaning, the study of Christianity, Judaism and Western Secularism, their sources of scriptures, their scriptural languages and development of the western culture; such studies should be undertaken by Muslims only after having mastered Islamic studies. There are at least twenty translations of the Qur'an done by the non-Muslim scholars of Arabic and Islamic studies whereas there is not a single translation of the Bible in any language rendered from the most ancient sources by a Muslim scholar. Only when Muslims learn ancient Greek, Hebrew and other Biblical languages and translate the Bible, we will find out the truth about the Bible. As we can see that among Christians there are many translations of the Bible contradicting each other resulting in many denominations, such as Jehovah Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, Born Again, Unitarians, Catholics, Orthodox and others. The West has produced over the last three centuries experts in Arabic, Urdu, Persian and Turkish languages, Qur'an and Hadith studies, Fiqh of all Islamic *madhahib*, Islamic history and culture and they have used their expertise to weaken Muslims in their faith and practices. Let us examine what the Muslims have done in occidental studies. It is never too late to embark upon a mission which should have been taken up a long time ago. Muslim scholars in the early centuries mastered Greek, Persian and Hindu philosophies, Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism and we have to update their works. Those Muslims who are living among Hindus, Buddhists and people belonging to other religions and traditions should train specialists for the respective religions and faith traditions.

### **10. Muslim children education**

Muslim children are not receiving good Islamic education even in full-time Muslim schools, Sunday schools or any other schools for supplementary Islamic education. The curricula needs to be overhauled and the new curricula should be based purely on the Qur'an and Hadith. We need to teach our children courses in **da'wah** at all levels. The courses on da'wah should include beliefs and practices of other religions and objective Islamic outlook. Comparative Islamic teachings should include courses on philosophies of atheism and agnosticism and their evil effects world-wide thereby protecting our children from anti-God philosophies. Even Muslim countries should revamp their children's education in the light of recommendations given in this paper.

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<sup>46</sup> The Qur'an 3:103.

### **11. College and university education for young Muslims**

Education is the key to the future of Islam and Muslims in our world. Muslims have a duty to snatch away the education system from the hands of secular and anti-God policy makers. Muslim education must consist of a few core courses in Qur'an, Hadith, *aqeedah*, general comparative religion, mainly non-Islamic religions in the region or country wherever Muslims are living, for example, Hinduism in India, Christianity in the Middle East, Buddhism in Indonesia, etc. and comparative understanding of the philosophies of atheism, secularism and agnosticism. We must prepare our young for ideological battles all over the world. Shirk and Iblees of our time is anti-Islam secularism which we have to fight with superior Islamic ideology and defeat it.

### **12. Protection of Muslim young and old from false slogans.**

Slogans are manufactured for the exploitation of people's emotions. Islam is not a religion of emotions but of reason and rationale. Islam is not a religion of traditions but of revealed knowledge. Islam does not demand traditional conformity developed by fallible human beings but the conformity given by the Creator through His chosen human messenger which itself has a lot of flexibility. When fallible human beings reinterpret Islam, often they make it only worse and take away built in flexibility and freedom of choice. Traditional Islam is corrupt and difficult to live by but the Islam left by the Prophet Muhammad, understood and practiced by his companions is pure and simple. Traditional Islam is not able to keep up with the changing world and its demands. Islam of the Qur'an and Sunnah is ahead of its time and absorbs any changes brought by Allah through the hands of human beings whether Muslim or non-Muslim.

### **13. Need for the Islamization of the English Language and Production of Literature.**

Islam islamized the Arabic language and it was followed by Persian (Farsi), Turkish and many other language of the Muslim majority countries. There are terms which are not translatable, such as *deen*, *salat*, *du'aa*, *dhikr* and hundreds of other terms which should be introduced in the English language dictionaries with meaning provided by the Muslim experts. In addition, Muslims have to transfer most of the classical Islamic literature from Arabic to English. The existing translations are extremely poor and inadequate. Refer to the paper on this topic by this author<sup>47</sup>.

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ISLAMOPHOBIA-2.985 / JUNE 4, 1998.

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<sup>47</sup> M. Amir Ali, "NEEDS FOR PUBLICATION OF ISLAMIC LITERATURE FOR THE SURVIVAL AND GROWTH OF MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN AMERICA", presented at the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of Association of Muslim Social Scientists held at SUNY College, Brockport, New York, November 28-30, 1997.