

# THE ISLAMIC CONCEPT OF SOCIETY

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## Abstract

Development implies a change that is desirable, holistic and universal. In this sense Islam commands that one's environment must be cared for, protected and forbids destructing it in any way. It does so through the following means: It teaches us to establish justice. It specifies roles for men and women, where men are made in charge of the present and women are made responsible for the development of the future of society by raising good children. Men therefore are required to sacrifice to protect women and children so that the future of Islam is secure. Quran also deals with the social issues of proper distribution of wealth, through the institution of Zakat; so that the rich share their bounties with the poor and everyone help the destitute and weak, so everyone would have a support system. Quran also teaches us to be good to our parents, everywhere in the Holy book Allah commands His obedience follows with the commands of obedience of parents, as they raised us and we are doing what we are doing in life because of their hard work and sacrifices. Quran and Holy Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) also teaches us to treat our neighbours well, our family, fellows and human beings properly and even animals and plants should be treated properly as they are all created by Almighty Allah for a definite purpose. Quran and Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) also teach that the good should be strong and defend against the evil ones on any side. Quran also teaches that there are good people in all religions and faiths. The core of the Quran and Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) is Monotheism, that is, Belief in Almighty Allah. This becomes the foundation of peace as Allah, the Unique, made everyone. So, Monotheism is the foundation of peaceful-coexistence. This paper aims to study the contribution of Holy Quran and Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) in the development of society.

**Key words:** *Islam, Hadith, Destruction, Justice, Responsibility of Parents, Wealth, institution, Zakat, Evil, Peace-, Belief, Monotheism, Almighty of Allah- Sacrifice.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Society is a web of social relationships. Islam presents a unique and comprehensive view of the concept of society. For, it perceives it as an association formed in accordance with the Divine revelation contained in Quran and the Sunnah of the prophet Mohammad (PBUH), synthesizing material, and the spiritual aspects of human life. It views society as an organic whole, where all aspects of life are considered as a component part of the body hence, negating sectarianism and racism. It is a universal social system based on the principle of Tawheed (Oneness of God), which is the cornerstone of the world unity. It is through submission to the law of God that Islamic society attains universal characteristic and transform all humankind to a single brotherhood (Muhammad 1977).<sup>1</sup> Development of society is very essential for the overall stability and harmony of society. Development, as a process meant to empower the poor, reduce exploitation, and oppression by those having economic, social, and political power.

“Surely Allah commands justice and the doing of good (to others), and giving to the kindred, and He forbids indecency and evil and rebellion. He admonishes you that you may be mindful. And fulfill the covenant of Allah, when you have

made a covenant, and break not your oaths after confirming them; and you have indeed made Allah your surety. Surely Allah knows what you do" Holy Qur'an (16:90-91)<sup>2</sup>. These verses certainly train a Muslim in the best behaviour, and order them to form a strong Islamic society. They also order justice among the people. For example, they order man to be just among his children when giving them money or when buying them clothes or dealing with them at home. He should not differentiate between them (i.e. to prefer one above the other). Further, they order the judge to pass judgment with justice and not to be unjust over the rights of others. Allah is Just and loves justice. The Holy Qur'an explains that it is obligatory for Muslims to practice justice in both their deeds and their speech so no one will be oppressed or lose his right. The Qur'an also warns Muslims to do good and charitable deeds voluntarily.

Whoever helps the poor or removes enmity between two persons or visits his neighbour or teaches others the way of guidance and belief is indeed the doer of good and beneficence. Surely, giving charity and doing good and striving towards its spread among the society makes up a strong and homogeneous society in which love, co-operation and progress flourish. The Holy Qur'an wants a Muslim to be beneficent. Surely Allah is the Beneficent, Who loves beneficence. The Qur'an, through these verses, orders Muslims to give their relatives their rights and help the needy and the sick, to ask after those who move away, and to maintain good relations with them.<sup>3</sup>

The Prophet of Allah (s) also orders the Muslims to have good relations with their relatives when he says: "Treat your relatives with compassion even if it is (only) by a salutation (salaam)." The Qur'an also forbids Muslims against committing indecency, evil and rebellion including those harmful deeds that cause the halt of progress in society, misery to mankind and the collapse of nations. The Holy Qur'an also orders Muslims to fulfil their promises and forbids them from giving promises without fulfilling them. Muslims should respect their covenants and promises when they deal with others. They should strive towards doing deeds that please Allah and never go against Islamic laws.<sup>4</sup>

## 2. CONCEPT OF SOCIETY IN ISLAM

The conception of society in Islam is much more comprehensive, for it synthesizes material and spiritual aspects of human life and views society as an organic whole, where all aspects of life considered as parts of a body, and where the affliction of individual part will equally affect the whole. In contrary to the Islamic conception of society, where the divine law takes precedence over society, sociology perceives society to take precedence over the law. As such, the law is a social product and formulated to serve the interest of each member of the society. Thus, the man made law, being the product of human desire and fancy, cannot provide a permanent basis for regulating human conduct. It is susceptible to changes that occur in the society. On the other hand, divine law is immutable it furnishes permanent basis for regulating human conduct and behaviour. It never allows society to change or stray from the right path. Thus, the Islamic conception of society originated in the immutable divine law that aims at promotion of righteous life and the prevention of evil. Comte, the founding father of sociology perceived society as the outgrowth of family, the basic social unit, from which arise tribes and nations. On the contrary, Islam perceives every individual as a social unit, for he is the centre of gravity and is the launching instrument that can put Islam or any other system into full action on a full scale (Abdalati 1978).<sup>5</sup> The role of individual, in such capacity, is because it is by means of his qualities and action that social relations emerge and constitute the life of the society. Therefore, in recognition of this fact, Islam provides all opportunities for the development of individual personality to enable him contribute to the welfare of the society. However, it also imposes certain limit on individual to prevent him from coming into conflict with the rest of the society. This is done through character building, which basic elements consist of the knowledge of one's duties toward God and society and the practical training received through the pillar or cardinal principles of Islam. The latter demands from him righteous deed and piety in the form of *Salat* (daily five times prayer), *zakat* (poor due), *Sawm* (fasting in the month of *Ramadan*) and *hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca once in a lifetime, for those with means). The performance of these obligations has a tremendous effect on individual character, for; it purifies his soul and prepares him for self-sacrifices, the very ethos of Islamic society. Thus, individuals with such character find pleasure in doing well to others and prefer others above themselves. A society based on such spirit is not prone to any permanent state of conflict and therefore can be likened to an organism of harmonious development (Abdalati 1978). As stated in the Quran (59:9): "Nevertheless, give preference to other over them even though poverty was their own lot."

## 3. TAWHEED (ONENESS OF GOD)

The oral recital of the 'Kalimah of Shahadah' (testifying or to bear witness) which embodies acknowledgment and the acceptance of the unique reality of God and the prophecy of Muhammad (PBUH.) is the fundamental and most basic principle upon which all Islamic activities depend. Hence, belief in the Oneness of God is the First principle of Islam and everything Islamic. Its implication is that God is only one, and the only Creator and that everything else is separate and different from Him. He is the source of all goodness, justice and truth. Everything that happened in the past or is in the process of happening or going to happen is all within His knowledge and with His command. His will is the law

of nature and the law of morality. All creatures worship and praise Him in their own way (Abu Sulayman 1989). Belief in the Oneness of God implies the unity of moral law, for believer should practice what he believes otherwise, mere acceptance of faith without living up to it is meaningless. Therefore, coordination between faith and actions is of crucial importance. This is clear from the Quranic verse (61:2) where contradiction between faith and action is condemned: Therefore, the effectiveness of faith requires action, which in its turn is good only when it is in accordance with the belief. It is for this reason that the moral law of Islam requires unity between belief and action, as well as thought and deeds. After all moral values are meant to be realized in action and not merely to be accepted in theory, for their actualization in real life is possible only when people live up to them (al-Buti 1987).<sup>6</sup> The significance of practice as regard to belief is also clear from the saying of the prophet (S.A.W.), in which he told a group of Muslims who were studying together in the Mosque of Madina: “Acquire of knowledge as much as you can afford. But always remember that God reward comes only with action” (al-Shatibi 1087 AH).<sup>7</sup> Obviously, a society with individuals of such moral character would automatically be good. It is for this reason that, Islam focuses more on individual character and trains him to be a good member of the society. On the contrary, sociology trivializes individual and speak of society and its scientific study, which is theoretical and fruitless. Islam takes a realistic view of the society, for it acts upon the principle “Take care of the individual, who form the society, and the society will take care of itself” (Muhammad 1977). The effect of belief in the unity of God and His attribute is quite clear, for it cultivates in believer a sense of awareness of his accountability before God in the day of Hereafter, and a sense of responsibility towards society. This awareness prevents believer from committing sin and indulgence in lying, deceiving, and selfishness, which have negative effect on the society. This is due to his conviction that selfishness deprives his brethren-in-faith of sharing in the bounties of God. Also believe in the unity of God is the most effective means of achieving social solidarity and brotherhood. This is clear from the history of humankind, for they were split into various sects and groups due to the difference in their object of believe and religion.

#### 4. UNITY AND BROTHERHOOD

The social system of Islam is based upon sound and just principles, which are designed to secure happiness and prosperity for both individual and society. It does not tolerate class warfare, social caste, or domination of individual over society or vice versa. It advocates the unity of humankind and its equality before God. This unity of humankind is perceived to be due to the common parentage of Adam and Eve and due to the same Creator – creation relationship that Divine unity has with all humans, different only in degree of righteousness (Abu Sulayman 1989). Therefore, the fact that humanity is descended from one universal family, entitles everyone to enjoy the common benefit and to share the common responsibility. Humankind’s realization of the unity of his origin and nature purifies his mind from racial prejudice or social injustice, and facilitate the unity of social behaviour among the people in the same manner as they are united in nature by the bond of common parentage. This unity of humanity by nature and origin is stressed in many Quranic verses and the tradition of the prophet (S.A.W.), to eliminate racial pride and claims of national or ethnic superiority, and prepare the ground for genuine brotherhood. The Quran states the unity of origin of human being as follow (4:1): “O Mankind! Reverence your Guardian-Lord, who created you from a single person, created of like nature his mate, and from them spread countless men and women.”<sup>8</sup>

Thus, the conception of the unity of humankind by origin and its consequent behavioural unity are the hallmarks of Islamic social system. Islam conceives human unity not only in terms of his origin and nature but also in terms of ultimate goal, which is to worship God and serve his cause, the cause of truth and justice, of love and mercy, of brotherhood and morality. Therefore, this unity of origin and the ultimate goal constitute formidable basis of the relation between individual and society. It bring about social solidarity between individual and society which manifest itself in terms of mutual responsibility; individual being responsible for the welfare of the society and to God (Abdalati 1978). As a result, of this realization the individual members of society develop a sound social mindedness and a genuine feeling of inescapable responsibility. In the same manner, society is responsible to God for the welfare of the individual. Thus, individual is expected to contribute to society when he has the capacity to do so. In return for this, the society is responsible for his security and welfare especially in case of his disability. Accordingly, the realization of the unity of origin, in the framework of social relation, leads to harmonious correspondence between duties, rights, and mutual responsibility. Individual’s rights are preserved and respected as long as they are not in conflict with the societal responsibility. Meanwhile, no individual or class of individual is allowed to exploit the society and corrupt the state. Thus, it became clear that in Islamic social system the relation between individual and the society is bounded by harmony, peace, and mutual security. In addition to the unity of humanity in origin and ultimate goal and mutual responsibility, cooperation in goodness and piety is another important feature of Islamic social system. Besides, full recognition of individual’s sacred rights to life, property and honor, it requires him to play active role in the domain of social morals and ethics. He cannot remain indifferent in this regard and is duty bound to play active role in establishing a sound social morality by promoting good and preventing the evil by all means available to him. The lack of sense of



responsibility in the social structure is an indication of low morale, disordered conscience and undernourished faith and selfishness on the part of its individual members (Abdalati 1978).<sup>9</sup> Consequently, Islamic social system provides a very lofty, sound and comprehensive way of life based on sincere love for one's fellow human being, mercy for the young, respect for the elders, comfort and consolation for the distressed, visiting sick, relieving the grieved, genuine feeling of brotherhood and social solidarity, respect for the right of other people to life, property and honour, mutual responsibility between individual and society. These patterns of the Islamic social order are admirably stated in the last sermon that the prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) delivered during his last pilgrimage to Mecca. The sermon of the prophet underlines the sanctity of life, property, and honour as the fundamental right of human being and therefore, should be taken into account in the framework of social relation. The viability of social system depends on its ability to preserve and promote these fundamental rights. It also demonstrates the equality of humankind and fellowship of the believers and their mutual responsibility and concern. Therefore, believe in the Oneness of God play the most effective role in society of such characteristics. It bring about unity among the believers through purifying their soul from evil tendency and selfishness, and nurture in them altruism, the highest moral quality. They no longer live for themselves but for all their brothers in God's creation and avoid all that qualities which are in contradiction to God's attributes of mercy and justice. The conception of society from Islamic perspective is free from any discriminatory patterns based on caste and creed, for it stress on the equality of humankind with the freedom of thought and action. This is due to the common parentage of the humankind, for, all humankind descended from one single pair, Adam and Eve. Thus, there is no ground for racial discrimination in Islamic conception of the society. All tribes, races, and nations are conceived as only labels of knowing differing characteristics. They are all one before God and the most honoured before Him is the one who is the most righteous. As stated in the Quran (49:13): "O mankind! We created you from a single pair of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that ye may know each other, Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of God is he who is the most righteous of you". From this verse, it is clear that race, colour or clan do not constitute the criterion based on which individual merit of superiority can be judged. The only criterion for one's merit is his/her righteous deed that he/she carries out in society. Thus, righteousness is the only standard of greatness which believers are required to cooperate on and not to cooperate on its opposite which is sin and rancour, as is stated in the Quran (5:2): "Cooperate and help one another in righteousness and piety, and not in sin and rancor."<sup>10</sup>

## 5. BALANCE AND TRUTH

Islam presents the best type of society, which is balanced and is free from extremes. It considers it a virtue to avoid the extreme on either side and take the middle course of affairs. The Quran states (2:143) (3:110) this position of Islam: as the prophet (S.A.W.) has been a pattern unto you. "You are the best of people evolved for mankind enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong." Therefore, Islamic society is a social system of universal character, which guides scattered and strayed humanity to the right path, through the belief in the Oneness of God. Although in the past, philosopher and thinkers made many attempts and many messengers were sent to attain the unity of humankind and to spread the eternal light of God's grace. However, their efforts and message lacked the character of universality, for they were meant for certain people and certain period of time. However, Islam as a justly balanced and truth message of God enjoys the character of universality. For, it is addressed to the whole humanity regardless of time and space factors, and stresses on the brotherhood of humankind and their love for each other. It is true that other divine religions acted in the same manner, however, the merit of Islam lies in the fact that it does not entertain any conception showing the superiority of race or a group of people over others. For example, Judaism has the conception of specially chosen people and Christianity the claim of recovering the last sheep of Israel. Furthermore, Islam does not entertain the notion of the kingdom of God in the heaven and the kingdom of Caesar on earth, as held by Christianity. This meritorious status of Islam is rightly pointed by Kerr: "In professing to provide man with a political and legal system as well as spiritual faith, Islam denies at the outset, the conception familiar to Christianity of separation between temporal and spiritual matters" (Kerr 1966).<sup>11</sup> Hitti make similar observation to the same effect by saying that: "Moses was a prophet, so were Abraham, Noah, Christ and others, each with a dispensation appropriate for a certain time. But Muhammad's dispensation sums up well as it supersedes all earlier ones. It is final after it there is none" (Hitti 1961).<sup>12</sup> From these statements, it become clear that Islam is a comprehensive and universal message without any discriminatory patterns, and views all humanity as one brotherhood on the basis of the Oneness of God. The universality of Islam and its all-embracing nature is due to its embodiment of all aspects of human life, body and soul, individual and social, worldly and the hereafter, God and His relation to man and the universe. In such capacity, it was delivered by Muhammad (S.A.W) the last messenger as guidance to the whole humanity. The unity of God constituting the cornerstone of Islam was to express itself in the unity of man. In fact, Islam is the religion preached by all earlier prophets to particular group or society in certain time and place. But its perfection as a world order that cast across physical barrier and unite humanity under the truth of God was accomplished by the prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) the last prophet of God. Consequently, the concept of prophet hood and revelation play a dominant role in the conception of society in Islam, for it is seen as the source of guidance to humanity through which virtue, peace and blessing in this world and the

Hereafter is made possible. The prophet hood is not the psycho-mental and physiological qualities of the prophet, which could be due to overexcited nerves or stirred imagination. Rather it is a source of model human physical, moral, and intellectual perfection (el-Mesawi 1998).<sup>13</sup> It is a real phenomenon through which linkage between the heaven and the earth and between God and man is established. The underlying purpose of the prophet hood and revelation is to import knowledge of the right and wrong to humanity and guide them to the straight path of God, manifested in individual sound social behaviour in the society. Thus, prophet hood is an eloquent expression of God love for creation and His will of guiding them to the right way of belief and behaviour (Abdalati 1987). Therefore, the concept of revelation and prophet hood and its significance in the human society underline God justice to humanity. For, He shows the guidance to him/her and then holds him/her responsible for his/her behaviour

## 6. ISLAMIC SOCIETY AS A MODEL SOCIETY

Religion is a means for the people to express collective beliefs concerning the social commitment and social solidarity and provides a way for the people to affirm common values, beliefs and ideas and hence serves as a central value system<sup>14</sup>. Islamic conception of society, as mentioned earlier, is not based on race, nationality, locality, occupation, kingship, or special interest. It is *Tawheed* (belief in the Oneness of God) manifested in man's submission to the Will of God, obedience to His law and commitment to His cause that constitute its basis. Therefore, Islamic society is the one fostered and nourished by Islam and has a historical mission which caste across physical boundaries, geographical location and goes beyond mere survival, sheer power, breeding or physical continuity. This is clearly stated in the Quran (3:104): "Let there be a community or Ummah among you, advocating what is good, demanding what is right and eradicating what is wrong. They are indeed successful" Thus, it is on the account of the historical role of demonstrating the virtuous, life both on individual and social levels that Islamic society can be considered as a modal society for the whole of humanity. Islam views society as an organic entity which patterns of social relation network are free from 'opposition, contention, and confrontation of the interest of different classes. It also integrates different elements into a single people or *Ummah* through religious principles and institutions with the aim of creating a society, which, in its totality as well as within the heart of individual members, reflects *Tawheed* and illustrates the functioning of the divine well in life of humankind (Nasr 1994).<sup>15</sup> It attains unity in all domains of life and removes any destructive competition and confrontation as regard to various classes of human society based on sex or social status.<sup>16</sup> The strength of social relation in the Islamic conception of society is seen in the active role played by both individual and the society. The prophet (S.A.W.) describes the role of individual. Recorded by Imam Muslim (1954) in Kitab al-Iman (Bab Bayan Kawn al-Nahy 'an al-Munkar min al-Iman wa 'ann al-Iman Yazid wa Yanqus): "Whoever of you see something wrong must seek to rectify it by action or deed, if he cannot, let him to change it by words, if he cannot, let his feeling of disapproval and condemnation intensify and this is the minimal degree of faith.". From this statement of the prophet (S.A.W.) it becomes clear that in the Islamic conception of society, the individual is duty bound to play active role in elimination of the vice and promotion of good in society. In the same way, the society is responsible for promotion of good and the prevention of evil as a whole. It is due to this characteristic, as stated earlier, that it is praised in the al-Quran (2:143) as the middle nation<sup>17</sup>. The meaning of witnessing as a role of Islamic society in the context of this verse is that the community of Islam must be exemplary in setting the highest standard of performance both on societal and individual levels. By avoiding excess and extravagance, static rigidity, it must be able to present a middle course of action, hence providing a reference point for others. It must remain steadfast and consistent, know what is acceptable and what is rejected, and have the principle of permanence and movement, the hardest test of human character and social viability (Abdalati 1987). It is in the light of above role and qualities that Islamic community is described as the best human community ever evolved. In Islamic conception of society individual, members are entrusted with the responsibility to do everything within their means for its safeguard and continuity. To this end, certain roles are set, for example, the rules of marriage, the rules of inheritance, the duties of *zakat* and *hajj* and the mutual rights and obligations of kin and the individual awareness of social belonging. All these are meant to secure the healthy continuity of the Muslim community.<sup>18</sup>

## 7. AAYATS IN THE QUR'AN ABOUT JUSTICE

"You who believe! Be upholders of justice, bearing witness for Allah alone, even against yourselves or your parents and relatives. Whether they are rich or poor, Allah is well able to look after them. Do not follow your own desires and deviate from the truth. If you twist or turn away, Allah is aware of what you do". Al Quran (4: 135). "Among those we have created there is a community who guides by the Truth and act justly according to it. Al Quran (7: 181) and we see in Qur'an; "... if you do judge, judge between them justly. Allah loves the just", (5: 42), "You who believe! Show integrity for the sake of Allah, bearing witness with justice. Does not let hatred for a people incite you into not being just? Be just. That is closer to Taqwa. Fear [and respect] Allah. Allah is aware of what you do" and (5: 8) "Every nation has a Messenger and when their Messenger comes everything is decided between them justly. They are not wronged". (10: 47)<sup>19</sup>

"We sent Our Messengers with the Clear Ayahs and sent down the Book and the Balance with them so that mankind might establish Justice". Al Quran (57:25) and also "Say: My Lord has commanded justice..." (7: 29) So call and go straight as you have been ordered to. Do not follow their whims and desires but say, "I have Imam in a Book sent down by Allah and I am ordered to be just between you. Allah is our Lord and your Lord. We have our actions and you have your actions. There is no debate between us and you. Allah will gather us all together. He is our final destination." (42: 15) and also "Among those we have created there is a community who guide by the Truth and act justly according to it". Al Quran (7: 181). "Those with faith, those who are Jews, and the Christians and Sabaeans, all who believe in Allah and the Last Day and act rightly, will have their reward with their Lord. They will feel no fear and will know no sorrow." Al Quran (2: 62) and also in Qur'an we see "Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair admonition, and argue with them in the kindest way". (16: 125) and "Is it not likely that, if you did turn away, you would cause corruption in the earth and sever your ties of kinship? Such are the people Allah has cursed, making them deaf and blinding their eyes". (47: 22-23)

"Allah does not forbid you from being good to those who have not fought you in the deen (religion) or driven you from your homes or from being just towards them. Allah loves those who are just. Allah merely forbids you from taking as friends those who have fought you in the religion and driven you from your homes and who supported your expulsion. Any who take them as friends are wrongdoers?" (60: 8-9) and also we see in Qur'an; "As for those who reject Allah's Ayes, and kill the Prophets without any right to do so, and kill those who command justice, give them news of a painful punishment". (3: 21). The success of Muslims in worldly matters can be explained only through the knowledge of the social sciences. The Quran once again is so clear on this issue; "Allah will raise up to (suitable) ranks (and degrees) those of you who believe and who have been granted knowledge". (58:11)<sup>20</sup>

## 8. JUSTICE IN PERSONAL LIFE

The Holy Qur'an says: "If you cannot maintain equality with more than one wife, marry only one or any slave-girls you may own. That will make easier for you to avoid injustice." Al Quran (4:3) The Holy Prophet even when he was in his death-bed took care of doing justice to his wives, as he used to get his bed shifted to the chamber of the wife who had turn on that night. Joe Leigh Simpson states that Ayesha, one of the wives of the Holy Prophet said; "The Holy Prophet never gave preference to one wife over another; he treated them all alike. He used to visit every one of his wives daily and inquired of their welfare, but every one of them had her own turn. If he wanted to stay with someone of them when it was not her turn he first asked the permission of the concerned wife". Thereafter, she further said, "But I never gave my turn to any of the Holy Prophet's wife".<sup>21</sup>

## 9. JUSTICE IN DISTRIBUTION OF PROPERTY

The State's budget should be equally allocated among all sections of the society. It should not be such that people living near the capital city may get a greater share. TejatetTejasen declares that like Prophet Shu'ayb many of the Prophets, after inviting the people to the belief in monotheism and prophet hood, gave the first priority to the just distribution of wealth and honest use of weights and measures in business transactions.<sup>22</sup> The Holy Qur'an says; "Maintain just measure in your business and do not cheat. Weigh your goods with proper balance and do not defraud people in their property or spread evil in the land". (26:181—183) and also we see in Qur'an; "Woe to those who are fraudulent who demand a full measure from others but when they measure or weigh, give less". (83:1-3)

## 10. STATUS OF PARENTS IN THE HOLY QUR'AN

The philosophy of respecting parents is located on the security and safety of life. It coincides with the philosophy of the human being's creation. Allah says human beings have been created with the best calendar for enjoying their lives. "And we have enjoined on man goodness (Ihsan) to his parents, and if they contend with you that you should be polytheist with Me, of whom you have no knowledge, do not obey them, to me is your return, so I will inform you of what you did." Al Quran (29:8). What sort of a relationship should we maintain with our parents? In what matters are we not allowed obeying them? Generally what opinion has mankind held concerning their parents and ancestors when the message of Allah was delivered to them? What should be our relationship with our parents in case they are unbelievers? The answers to such and many other questions are provided in the Qur'an as guidance for all Mankind. The Qur'an provides us clear criteria for establishing a relationship with our parents whether they be believers or unbelievers.<sup>23</sup> The followings are some Ayes dealing with this subject:

## 11. CODE OF CONDUCT WITH PARENTS

Khashif Ahmed Shehzade continues that as believers, we are instructed about the sort of behaviour that we are to maintain with our parents, especially when they have reached old age: "And your Sustainer has decreed that you will



serve none but Him, and that you be good (Ihsan) towards Parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in your life, neither say not to them (even) fie nor rebuke them but address them with terms of honor." Al Quran (17:23) and also Quran says: "And out of kindness lower to them the wing of humility and says My Sustainer; bestow on them your mercy even as they cherished me in childhood." (17:24).

In the above Ayes we are restrained from even saying 'fie' 'oof' to our parents as people who are harsh on their parents and rebuke them are described as 'those in loss' khasireen: "And (there is one) who says to his Parents 'Fie' on you! Do you hold out the promise to me that I shall be raised up, even though generations have passed before me?" And they two seek Allah's aid (and say) 'Woe to you! Believe! For the promise of Allah is true.' But he says: 'This is nothing but tales of the ancients!' (46:17) and also "Such are they against who is proved the sentence among the previous generations of Jinn (hidden persons) and mankind that have passed away; for they are those in loss." (46:18). As believers we are also commanded to spend on our parents from our resources as they cherished us in childhood: "They ask you what they should spend. Say: 'Whatever you spend that is good is for Parents and kindred and orphans and those in want and for wayfarers. And whatever you do that is good, -Allah has its knowledge.'" (2:215). It is obligatory for us to provide for our parents when they are in need and not to desert them in an old home. Furthermore we cannot impose any hardships on them. Jesus the son of Mary (PBUH) is an example for us in this regard: (Jesus said) "And He has made me kind to my mother and not overbearing or miserable." (19:32). Women must be educated for a happy and healthy life. Educated women can be a better human being, successful mother and responsible citizen. Educating women will unquestionably increase the living standard both at and outside home<sup>24</sup>. Attainment of education by women enable her to live a dignified life in a society not only as an individual but also as a useful member of society.

## 12. CONCLUSIONS

As a conclusion, Islam conceives society as association of the individuals formed in according with divine law with the purpose of achieving a harmonious and peaceful coexistence. Its conception of society is comprehensive and dynamic, for it does not compartmentalize the material and spiritual aspects of life but treat them as an organic whole. The divine law constitutes the base of society in Islamic conception. It considers every individual as a social unit, for, it is through his qualities and actions that social relation emerges. Therefore, individual personality is developed through the cardinal principles that have multidimensional effects, contributing to the welfare of the society. Believe in the Oneness of God as the fundamental principle plays a crucial role in the social relation network, for, it endows individuals with a sense of accountability to God and responsibility towards society. Thus, Islamic conception of society presents a realistic view of society by taking care of the individual and directing him/her in a direction that is conducive to good behaviour hence, good social relations. On the contrary, sociology trivializes individuals and speaks of society in a theoretical manner, which is fruitless. Unity and brotherhood is the basic principle of Islamic social order. It advocates the unity of human being and their equality before God for, they are all descendants of Adam and Eve. This realization purifies human beings' mind from social prejudice or social injustice and lead to the unity of social behaviour among individuals. However, this unity is not conceived only in terms of origin of human being but also in terms of their ultimate goal, hence, providing a firm theoretical foundation for the relationship between individual and the society. Cooperation in goodness and piety is another important element of an Islamic social system for; every individual is required to play an active role in the domain of social moral and ethics by promoting good and preventing evil. Islamic society is a model society for it sets the highest standard of behaviour by taking a balanced approach in its framework of social relations. It has the historical mission of demonstrating a virtuous life both on individual and societal level. In its totality it reflects the functioning of the divine Will in lives of human beings. It attains unity in all domain of life by removal of destructive competition from the sphere of its social relations network. Both the individual and society play active roles in the realm of moral and ethical commitment. Islam considers the Individual as the centre of gravity in the whole scheme of social relations. Therefore, it nurtures and nourishes both internal and external aspects of his nature by devising certain measures. The Internal aspect of human being which consists of the soul and the intellect and which is responsible for all moral and intellectual activities, is nourished by undertaking of the five cardinal principles which has multidimensional effect on the soul and the intellect. They are structured in a manner that primarily aims at the soul, which is the abode of motion and desire and nourishes it with the qualities that keep human desire under control. On the other hand, the external aspect of human nature is nurtured from personal aspect, in terms of purity, cleanliness, healthy diet, and proper manner of clothing and behaviour. Islam pays attention to diet in order to maintain a pure heart and sound mind and to nourish an inspiring soul and a clean and healthy body. Therefore, it allows all pure and good things and forbids all impure, bad and harmful things under ordinary circumstances. These are meant to strengthen human being sense of morality and wisdom and to contribute to their health and wealth, piety and common good behaviour

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