

# The Window

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## Bringing an End to the World of Extremism

Fatima Nasreen Hasan

(Continued from the previous issue)

### Defects of Extremism:

★ The first defect is that excessiveness is too repulsive for ordinary human nature to endure or tolerate. One should always keep in mind that legislation of Allah addresses the whole humanity not a special group who may have a unique capacity for endurance. Excessiveness is short lived since man's capacity for endurance and perseverance is naturally limited, and since man can easily become bored, s/he cannot endure any excessive practice for long. The Prophet (SAWS) said, "Do those deeds which you can endure as Allah will not get tired (of giving rewards) till you get bored and tired (of performing good deeds)... and most beloved to Allah is the one which is done regularly even if it were little". Excessive practice jeopardizes other rights and obligations. A sage once said, "Every extravagance is somehow bound to be associated with a lost right". As for example, if a woman starts offering *nafl* prayer day and night, she will be ignoring her children and family. And it is far better for the mother to give more time to her children (her family) than to offer those *nafl* prayers.

★ The second defect is that extremism acts as a serious barrier towards the propagation of Islam. Nowadays we see thousands of Muslims but we hardly see anyone who offers the five daily prayers or *sawm* properly and regularly. We observe Muslims drinking alcohol, women wearing shorts and so many things, which are clearly prohibited by Allah. Therefore the world is in need of proper and true Islamic guidance. We should show the young Muslims the path of moderation. All this will only be possible if Islam is propagated all over the world in the right manner. People should be addressed to Islam in a nice way so that they feel the need for it. How extremism is related to this issue then? We have already seen how an extremist calls other people to Islam. They do it in a harsh and cruel way. They would tell people to perform the unnecessary (i.e. excessive) *ibadah* like they do. Since people know the wrong side of Islam (because of those extremists) they naturally ignore it and do not find any interest in Islam. They get the idea that Islam is very complicated and a prosaic religion, which does not allow one to listen to music, to watch TV, to go to a party etc. Finally we can see that the world will never realize the true teachings of the Quran through extremism. Islam allows everything but it has only placed a limit to every action we perform so that we do not deviate from the path of Allah even for a minute.

### Remedies:

Since extremism has so many disadvantages, how can we root out extremism from the society? In other words what are the remedies for extremism? We must give due weight to the following four remedies briefly discussed:

★ Societies must perform a positive role in the remedy. As an initial step a Muslim society should acknowledge and confirm its genuine commitment to Islam through the adherence of the teachings of Islam.

★ Young Muslims must acquire the proper methodology of comprehending Islam, and of dealing with themselves, people and life. Emphasis must be given on *Usul al fiqh*, a discipline that studies the methodology of deriving laws from the sources of Islam and of establishing their juristic or constitutional validity.

★ Proper knowledge of commandments (e.g. *Mustahabb*) and prohibitions along with the true understanding of the religion (*din*) would prevent any confusion regarding status, variations or similarities concerning the juristic value of actions.

★ Islam began as a simple *din*, then gradually the obligatory duties were introduced, the prohibitions prescribed, the legislative matters detailed. Similarly in gathering deep knowledge of the *Sunnah* of Allah's creation, one must have patience and study the

matter one by one thoroughly.

In order to establish a balanced *Ummah* all of us should act in concert against the extremists. Let us pray to Allah: "Show us the straight way, the way of those on whom Thou has bestowed Thy grace, those whose (portion) is not wrath, and who get not astray."

[*Al-Fatihah*: 6-7]\*

\*The above article (*Bringing an End to the World of Extremism*) is a brief summary of the book **Islamic Awakening Between Rejection & Extremism** by Dr. Yusuf al-Qaradawi, an eminent Egyptian Islamic scholar and now working as Dean of the Faculty of *Shariah*, Qatar Islamic University. The English version of the book has been jointly published by American Trust Publication and The International Institute of Islamic Thought, USA. The book has however been translated into Bengali by Muhammad Saunallah Akhunji (*Islami Punorjagoron : Samasha O Sambhabona*. Price Tk.50) and published by Wadud Publications, 38/B North Brook Hall Road, Dhaka-1100.

## Al-Quran

It is He Who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth. That He makes it prevail over all religion, even though the pagans may detest (it). O ye who believe! Shall I lend you to a bargain that will save you from a grievous chastisement? - That ye believe in Allah and His messenger, and that ye strive (your utmost) in the case of Allah, with your wealth and your persons: that will be best for you, if ye but knew. [As-Saff: 9-11]

## Hadith

Whosoever of you sees an evil action, let him change it with his hand; and if he is not able to do so, then with his tongue; and if he is not able to do so, then with his heart - and that is the weakest of faith. [Forty *Hadith* by Imam Yahya An-Nawawi (*Hadith* No. 34) related by *Muslim*]

## Question & Answer

**Q: How does Islam view suicide? Is euthanasia permitted in Islam?**

[*Samia Faizun*, Sydney]

**Ans:** Committing suicide is considered a major sin in Islam, and the punishment for it in the Hereafter is severe. According to one *Hadith* of Prophet (SWAS), a person who commits suicide will appear on the Day of Judgement in a vicious circle where he feels the need to commit suicide, kills himself, and then is immediately resurrected to feel the same despair which again makes him commit suicide. There are two reasons why Islam takes such a strong stance in this matter:

☞ In Islam, no person owns anything in the absolute sense; even our own life is not our exclusive property, to dispose of, as we will. Life is a trust from Allah and the blessing of health, life and property is not ours to destroy.

☞ Since life is a trust, which should be used for the benefit of mankind, it is not permitted for anyone to destroy himself. To do so is a betrayal of the trust given to mankind by Allah.

According to a saying of Prophet (SWAS), which is noted as being very sound, the maximum that a Muslim is permitted to do if in unbearable psychological or physical distress, is to pray in the following way to Allah:

"Oh Allah! Give me life if life is better for me and give me death if you think it is better".

A Muslim should never despair of the mercy of Allah, and should never take matters into his own hands.

In Islam there is no 'mercy killing', therefore the person who tells someone else to kill him because his pain is unbearable etc. is just as guilty of sin as the person who commits suicide. The moral wrong in killing oneself cannot be hidden by telling someone else to kill you. Though Islam is opposed to the giving of a lethal drug to a patient, if a person is clinically dead, (no activity in the brain cells can be detected) and can only be kept alive artificially/technically with life support machines, then the Muslim position is that one is not obliged to keep a person alive artificially.

[Source: *Islamic Teachings Course*, Vol. 1; Dr. Jamal Badawi]

## **Glimpse from World Press Azan to be Allowed in Norway**

The city authorities of Oslo have taken a step nearer to allowing *Azan* to be sounded from the city's 18 mosques, it has been reported on the Internet. The head of the Norwegian capital's Urban Planning Department, Grete Horntvedt, has ruled that the five-times-a-day calls to prayer do not contravene noise reduction regulations. A final decision authorizing the prayer call rests with councilors within the various city districts, the report said. [IINA (Oslo)]

## **Holy Quran in Maldivian Language**

The Maldivian Muslim Scholars Committee has translated the meanings of the Holy *Qur'an* into the Maldivian language. The committee was formed at the request of the country's President Maamun Abdul Qayyum, and the translated version would soon be printed and distributed to the Muslims of Maldives. [IINA (Male)]

## **US Girl Prevented from Saying 'Bismillah'**

The Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR), a Washington-based Islamic advocacy group, recently called on the Washtenaw Community College in Ann Arbor, Michigan, to allow a Muslim student to mention God in the classroom. The student was prevented from making an Islamic religious reference at the beginning of one of her class presentations. Before the student could begin that presentation, the instructor handed her a letter stating that she could not utter the common Islamic phrase in the name of Allah, most Merciful, most Gracious, (*Bismillah*) as she had on a previous occasion. [IINA (Washington)]

## **Yusuf-al-Qaradawi's Book on Prophet's Intercession**

A new book by Muslim intellectual Dr. Yusuf-al-Qaradawi has been published in Cairo. It deals with the question of the Prophet's intercession during the Day of Judgement, and is a rejoinder to what Dr. Mustafa Mahmoud "maintains that there is no such thing as intercession by the Prophet (SWAS)". [IINA (Cairo)]

## **Islamic Encyclopedia on Compact Disc**

An electronic compact disc (CD) dictionary with 55,000 entries on Islamic culture in seven languages has been published in Libya. It is the largest dictionary of its kind of CD, and it is expected that the researchers and others interested in Islam and Islamic culture would find it very useful. Apart from Islamic terms the dictionary gives an explanation of each of the important terms, accompanied by pictures in motion and speeches. The seven languages used in the dictionary are English, French, Malaysian (Bahasa Melayu), Turkish, German, Indonesian, in addition to Arabic. [IINA (Tripoli)]

## **Biography**

Abdullah Faiyaz

Dr. Hammudah Abdalati graduated from Al-Azher University, Egypt. He received an MA from McGill University and a Ph D in Sociology from Princeton University. In 1958 he joined the Department of Islamic Culture, Al-Azhar. He was appointed in 1960 the first full-time director of the Canadian Islamic Center of Edmonton, Alberta. From 1967 till he passed away in September 1976, Dr. Abdalati was associate professor of Sociology at Utica College of Syracuse University.

Dr. Abdalati was well known to the Muslims of North America as well as intellectual groups and audience. For years he lectured on Islam, attended Islamic conventions, wrote articles in Arabic and English, and responded to inquiries. He was a source scholar to whom many students of Islam and Islamic culture turned for help. He is the author of *The Family Structure in Islam* published by American Trust Publication. Besides, Dr. Abdalati authored the book *Islam in Focus*. The later book has been translated into Bengali (*Islam Ekmatro Jibon Bidhan*. Price Tk.100) by Muhammad Habibur Rahman and published by Khairun Prakashani, 20 Paridash Road, Banglabazar, Dhaka.

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**The Asian Renaissance** by Anwar Ibrahim

"If the term Asian values is not to ring hollow, Asians must be prepared to champion ideals which are universal. It is altogether shameful, if ingenious, to cite Asian values as an excuse for autocratic practices and denial of basic rights and civil liberties. To say that freedom is Western or unAsian is to offend our own traditions as well as our forefathers who gave their lives in the struggle against tyranny and injustice."

"It has been argued that economic issues must be kept apart from non-economic ones. Neither politics nor morality must disrupt the peaceful clamour of the marketplace. This argument is again another gross misrepresentation of what Asian traditions have always stood for. The major Asian traditions stand for a holistic vision of life and society encompassing economic, social and political dimensions as opposed to partialistic and fragmentary approaches to development."

"For Asia to be truly global, its societies must be prepared to transform themselves and discard the harmful residue from the past—tribalism, feudalism, narrow-mindedness and fanaticism. It is not the case that Asia must lose its identity, but it must renew commitment to core values such as justice, virtue and compassion, that are in themselves universal. Creativity, imagination and courage is needed to translate these values into reality."

"The message of the Asian Renaissance should be heeded not just by the people of this region, but also by our erstwhile colonial masters. It is not enough that they merely express regret and remorse over the treatment meted out to those they once lorded over. Contrition is but the first step towards owning up to past sins. It lacks conviction when old prejudices persist. When they hector us on issues such as human rights, patronize us on the matter of values, impose conditionalities on trade, we cannot but help suspect a hidden agenda—a new form of domination in the place of the old."

The aforementioned quoted paragraphs are from the book **The Asian Renaissance** by Anwar Ibrahim, former Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia who is now languishing in the prison. The book discusses many vital issues affecting the Third World countries vis a vis the West. The 159 pages (hard cover) book cost U.S. \$20 and available at Times Book International, Times Centre, 1 New Industrial Road, Singapore 536196. Fax: (65) 285 4871. Tel: (65) 284 8844. e-mail: [te@corp.tpl.com.sg](mailto:te@corp.tpl.com.sg) The book is also available at Times Subang, Lot 46, Subang Hi Tech Industrial Park, Batu 3, 40000 Shah Alam, Selangor Darul Ehsan. Tel: (603) 736 3517.

## **Editorial**

People in our society due to ignorance and prejudiced mind take extreme position, especially in religious matters. It has been observed, extremism destroys individual life and cohesion in the social fabric. This is one vital reason for commotion and unnecessary schism in the society and definitely not a healthy sign. In this backdrop, we published for the benefit of readers the article **Bringing an End to the World of Extremism** by sister Fatima Nasreen Hasan. Hopefully, the article will help readers to understand the nature, form, depth and dimension of extremism. We intend to publish more such articles in future *inshaAllah*. To eradicate extremism and superstition and to build up *enlighten man* is the objective of **The Window**.

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