

Non-resistance to Evil

In some of its teachings, however, Christianity is apt to be too one-sided and unpracticable. For instance, Jesus is reported to have said:

“But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also, And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain”. (Matthew 5:39,41).

This was perhaps a necessary corrective to the hard-heartedness and vindictive spirit produced by the literal observance of the teaching of an eye, for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth". But can this teaching of "turn the other cheek also" be regarded as universal ? Can it be practised as a wholesome moral precept in all cases and on all occasions ? Non-resistance to evil when the perpetrator of evil is not one's self but someone else is the sign of cowardice and apathy. Submission to bullies and tyrants can bring

no good, it will only increase evil and human woe. It will encourage them to exploit and subdue others and 'ncrease disorder and injustice. Islam declares that evil in all cases must be repelled. If the evil doer can be reformed and prevented from doing violence and injury by kindness and mercy, then there can be nothing better than this. But if kindness makes him bolder in doing harm to others, then chastisement in proportion to the crime must be meted out to him. The teaching of the Quran in this respect also 'is universal and applicable to all cases. It says :

"The good deed and the evil deed are not alike. Repel the evil deed with one which is good, then lo! he, between whom and thee there was enmity will become as though he was a bosom friend." (The Quran 41:34)

"The guerdon of an ill-deed is an ill the like thereof. But whosoever pardoneth and amendeth (the evil doer by kindness and love), his wage is the affair of

God. Lo! He loveth not wrongdoing." (The Quran 42:39)

Monssticism and Celibacy

Christianity is too other-worldly, Jesus Christ is reported to have told the people, "If a man come to me, and hatee not his father and his mother, and wife, and children, and bretheren, and sisters, yea. and his own life also, he cannot be my disciples." (L.ke 14:26) And again: ,whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be MY disciple." (L,,k-c 14-.33) When a man told him that he would follow him, but he should be allowed to go and bury his dead father, Jesus is reported to have said "Follow me; and let the dead bury the dead." (Matthew 8:22) He even told the people to "make themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake." (Matthew 19: 12) The outcome of such a teaching can only be the production of stunted and contorted hypocrites instead of full grown human

beings.

Islam keeps a healthy balance between this world and the next. it says that the spirit cannot grow by crushing the body. Human instincts are not intrinsically bad. They must not be killed, but wisely controlled, channeled and purposefully used to make the life of man richer and better. This world has a meaning and a purpose, and it is only by leading a normal and fruitful life in the world and by appreciating and enjoying the beautiful gifts of God that man can come near to God, be of service to others, and prepare himself for the other world. Islam favours the middle path. The Holy Prophet declared that there was no monkery in Islam.

Wine, Sex, Gambling

While, on the one hand Christianity favours monasticism, on the other, it nowhere seems to have prohibited the three gateways to most crimes and sin—wine, gambling and the improper display of physical

attractions. Wine, in fact, forms a necessary element of the Holy Communion, and the first miracle of Jesus, as reported in John's Gospel, was the converting of water into wine. It is in the Holy Quran which contains complete moral guidance, that these evils are prohibited and condemned. Regarding wine and gambling, the Holy Quran says :

"O ye who believe ! Strong drink and games of chance and idols and divining arrows are only an infamy of Satan's handiwork. Leave it aside in order that ye may succeed-Satan seeketh only to cast among you enmity and hatred by means of strong drink and games of chance, and to turn you from remembrance of God and from His worship. Will ye then have done?" (The Quran 5:90,91).

Jesus prohibited his followers from looking with eyes of lust at the wives of others, but Islam goes further. It prevents men and women from unnecessarily staring at each other, whether with lust or

without' , I must, and wants ti-ieni to be decently dressed. It condemns the shameful display of physical charms in the following words:

"Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and be modest. That is purer for them. Lo! God is Aware of what they do. And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and be modest, and to display of their adornment only that which is apparent, and to draw their headcoverings over their bosoms, and not to reveal their adornment.(The Quran 24:30,31)

CHAPTER 5

ISLAM : A UNIVERSAL RELIGION

The Christianity of Jesus Christ was not meant to be a universal religion. Though as far as its fundamental message and teaching were concerned, the religion of Jesus was not different from Islam, yet it did not contain complete guidance for all aspects of human life and for all nations and ages, During the countless centuries of human history, when the different races of mankind were living in more or less complete Isolation and there was no quick means of communication between one nation and another, God was sending ciifferent prophets to the different peoples. Jesus was one of these national prophets. He was the Messiah of the Israelites. This is what Dr. C. J. Cadoux, an author whom we have already quoted several times in this book, writes with regard to the limited (national) scope of Jesus' mission:

"The office of Messiahship with which Jesus be-

lieved himself to be invested, marked him out for a distinctly national role: and accordingly we find him more or less confining his preaching and healing ministry and that of his disciples to Jewish territory, and feeling hesitant when on one occasion he was asked to heal a Gentile girl. Jesus, obvious veneration for Jerusalem, the Temple, and the Scriptures indicates the special place which he accorded to Israel in his thinking: and several features of his teaching illustrate the same attitude. Thus, in calling his hearers 'brothers' of one another (i.e., fellow-Jews) and frequently contrasting their ways with those of the Gentiles, in defending his cure of a woman on the sabbath with the plea that she was a daughter of Abraham' and befriending the tax-collector Zacchaeus 4because he too is a son of Abraham, and in fixing the number of his special disciples at twelve to match the number of the tribes of Israel-in all this Jesus shows how strongly Jewish a stamp he wished to

impress upon his mission."1

Each nation having been separately guided to the truth by the national prophets, the time was ultimately ripe in the plan of God to raise the World-prophet and reveal the Universal religion. And so, when the world was on the eve of becoming one, God raised the Prophet Muhammad to represent the essential message of all the prophets, shorn of all the later adulterations and misinterpretations. He amalgamated the religious traditions of the different nations into a single universal faith and culture and united the peoples of all nations and lands into a single world-wide brotherhood. He gave, the world a complete code of life for the entire humanity.

To establish the truth of his religion, the Prophet Muhammad did not resort to miracles, which may win over the few who witness them but fail to carry conviction to those of the subsequent generations. The appeal of his religion is to the reason and the

conscience of man. To carry the truth home to us he draws our attention to the phenomena of Nature the lessons of history and the teachings and experiences of the prophets of various nations. There is nothing in Islam which is of interest or benefit only to the people of a particular region or age. The Holy Quran enjoins nothing which is not uniformly inspiring, edifying and practicable for peoples of all ratiot,s and times. "The religious and moral teachings of Islam are of universal nature.

In considering the proposition that Islam and not Christianity is the universal religion, the reader must bear in mind the folowing facts :

1. The mission of Jesus was only for the children of Israel, but the Prophet Muhammad came with a message for all the nations of the earth. Jesus clearly stated :

"I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matthew 15:24)

He chose twelve special disciples to match the number of the tribes of Israel and he clearly told them :

"Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not : but go, rather to the lost sheep of the house If Israel." (Matthew 10:5.6).

On the other hand, the Prophet Muhammad from the very beginning of his ministry addressed himself to the entire humanity- It was revealed to him :

"We live not sent thee (Muhammad) but as a mercy to all the, nations." (The Ouran 21:107)

"Say (o Muhammad) : O mankind ! Lo am the Messenger of God to You 11-the messenger of Him unto Whom belongeth the Sovereignty of the heavens and the eath. There is no God save Him." (The Quran, 7:158).

Christianity believes that the Israelites are a chosen people. God has sent His revelations and prophets to

them alone. The Christians acknowledge only the prophets of Israel. All others they regard as impostors. But Islam says that it would be a denial of the universal providence of God to assert that prophets were raised only in one nation. According to the Holy Quran, God is the Lord and Cherisher of all the worlds. He has made no discrimination between nations in sending his revelations, He has raised prophets among all the nations of the globe. These same religion was revealed to all the prophets. The Holy Quran says:

“There is not a nation but a warner hath passed among them.” (35:24).

"And for every nation there is a Messenger." (10:48) "Verily We sent Messengers before thee (Muhammad), among them are those of whom We have told thee, and some of whom We have not told thee." (The Quran 40:78)

"Mankind are one community, and so God sent (unto all sections of them) Prophets as bearers of good tidings and as warners, and revealed therewith the Scripture with the truth that it might judge between mankind concerning that wherein they differed." (The Quran 2:213).

The Prophet Muhammad had come to complete, not to destroy, the work of the earlier prophets. He told his followers to have faith in the prophets of all the nations :

"Say (O Muslims) : We believe in God and that which is revealed unto us and that which was revealed unto Abraham, and Ismael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes, and that which Moses and Jesus received, and that which the Prophets (of each and every nation) received from their Lord. We make no

distinction between any of them, and unto Him we have surrendered." (The Quran 2:136).

Islam is the consummation of all the religions. By Ling the prophets and scriptures of all nations, Islam affirms the Unity and universal providence of God and the universality of religious experience, and also seeks to bring together people of all races and creeds in a single all-----embracing Faith and Brotherhood.

3. Islam, and not Christianity, gives complete guidance for all aspects and conditions of life. individual as well as social, national as well as international. Jesus Christ Iimseff admitted that lie had not come with the final or complete divine message for mankind, for the time was not yet ripe for it:

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." (John 16:12,13)

Five centuries after him the Spirit of tuth appeared

in the person of the Prophet Muhammad to convey the whole truth to mankind. God revealed to him :

"This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favour to you, and have chosen for you as religion Al-Islam." (The Quran 5,3)

The Prophet Muhammad is thus the last Prophet and the Message, which he brought from God is the final and complete message. Let us compare certain aspects of the religions of Jesus and Muhammad to see why we regard Islam and not Christianity as the complete message.

The Status of Women in Islam and Christianity

Jesus was the last prophet to appear among the Beni Israel. He introduced reforms in the teachings of the earlier Israelite prophets, where he felt such reforms were due. He reinterpreted some of the religious precepts of Moses to bring them in line with the needs of his age ; but others he left as they were. The so-called Old Testament of the Bible advocates mas-

sacre, condones polygamy, accepts slavery and orders the burning of witches. Jesus, who had come "not to destroy the law and the prophets but to fulfill", apparently saw nothing wrong with these or, at any rate, had no time to remedy them. For, he said or did nothing to humanize the Mosaic laws of war or to abolish slavery or to raise the status of women. He said not a word against polygamy.

St. Paul, who was the real founder of Christianity as it is understood and believed by the Christians, regarded woman as a temptress. He laid the entire blame for the fall of man and the genesis of sin on woman. This is what we read in the New Testament of the Bible

"Let the women learn 'in silence with full subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman deceived was in trans-

gression." (I Timothy 2:11,14)

"For the man is not of the woman-, but the woman of the man Neither was the man created for the woman but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power ,n her head because of the angels. (I Corinthians 1 1: 8,1 0)

And this is what some of the canonized saints of Christianity have said about woman :

Woman is a daughter of Falsehood, a sentinei of Hell, the enen-iy of peace ; through her Adam lost Paradise."

(St. John Damascene)

"Woman is the instrument which the Devil uses to gain possession of our souls." (St- CyPran)

“Woman is the fountain of the arm of the Devil, her voice is the hissing of the serpent” (St. Anthony).

“Woman has the poison of an asp, the alice of a dragon". (St. Gregory the Great).

The Holy Quran clears woman of the responsibility for the fail of Adam and vindicates her honour and dignity. It raises the status of woman to make her man's equal. For the first time in history woman was given the same rights as those of man by Islam.

"And they (women) have rights similar to those of men over them in a just manner." (The Quran 2:228)

The modern man recognizes that there can be no true freedom and dignity without economic rights. Fourteen hundred years ago, Islam gave woman the right to inherit the property and wealth of her father and husband and to acquire, own and dispose of wealth as she liked. The Holy Quran says :

"Unto men a fortune from that which they have earned, and unto women a fortune from that which they have earned." (The Quran 4:32)

"Unto men (of a family) belongeth a share of that which parents or near kindred leave, and unto wom-

en a share of that which parents or near kindred leave; whether it be little or much--a legal share."
(The Quran 4:7)

In marriage a woman is considered by Islam to be an equal and free partner. Marriage in Islam is a sacred contract between a man and a woman and the consent of both the parties has to be taken before marriage can take place. The Holy Quran describes woman as a companion of her husband-an object of love and source of peace and solace to him :

"And of His signs is this: He created for you help-meets from among yourselves that ye may find rest in them and He ordained between you love and mercy. Lo, here indeed are portents for folk who reflect." Quran 30:21)

To impress upon his followers the exalted position and sacredness of womanhood, the Prophet declared:

"Paradise lies at the feet of the mother." (Nasai 25:61)

He said that "women are the twin-halves of men," and that men and women come from the essence. Islam makes no distinction between them as regards their moral and spiritual capabilities and rewards:

"The believers, men and women, are protecting friends of one another, they enjoin the right and forbid the wrong, and they establish worship and they pay the poor-due, and they obey God and His messenger. As for these, will have mercy on them. Lo! God is All-mighty, All-wise." (The Quran 9:71)

"Whoever doeth right, whether male or female, and is a believer, him (or her) verily We shall quicken with good life, and We shall pay them a recompense in proportion to the best of what they used to do." (The Quran 16:89).

"Lo! men who surrender unto God, and Women who surrender, and men who believe and women who believe, and men who obey and women who obey, and men who speak the truth and women who

speak the truth, and men who persevere in righteousness and women who persevere, and men who are humble, and women who give alms, and men who fast and women who fast, and men who guard their modesty and women who guard their modesty, and men who remember God much and women who remember--God hath prepared for them forgiveness and a vast reward." (The Quran 33:35)

Elimination of Slavery

Islam is the first religion to improve the condition of slaves and to take steps for the total abolition of slavery, As the first step, the Holy Prophet made kind and brotherly treatment of slaves a duty of Muslims. They were to be considered as members of the family:

"Your slaves are your brethren. So if any one of you happens to have a slave, let him give him the same food that he himself eats, and the same clothing that he himself wears. And do not give them

such work as is beyond their power to perform, and if you ever happen to give them such work, you should help them in doing it." (Bukhari, Kitab al-Itq)

The following are just two of the many verses of the Holy Quran exhorting men to emancipate the slaves:

"Ah, what will convey unto thee what the Ascent is!-- It is to free the slaves and to feed in the day of hunger an orphan near of kin, or some poor wretch in misery,, and to be of those who believe and exhort one another to perseverance and exhort one another (90:12-17)

"It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces to the East and the West; but righteous is he who believed in God and the Last Day ... and giveth his wealth, for love of Him, to kinsfolk and to orphans and th needy and the wayfarer and to those who ask, and to set slaves free..... (2:177).

The institution of slavery being opposed to the Is-

Islamic teaching of the equality and dignity of man, the Prophet prohibited the taking of fresh slaves in very strong words :

"God has spoken to me, saying, there are three classes of men whose adversary I shall be on the Day of Judgment. Firstly, the man who, in My name, makes a covenant with some one and then breaks it. Secondly, the man who enslaves a free man, sells him and eats his price. Thirdly, the man who employs a man to do a work and exacts full work from him but does not pay him his full wages" (Bukhari, Kitab al.Bai).

Finally, came the categorical command of God not Only to give freedom to the slaves but also a part of one's wealth to rehabilitate them

"And such of your slaves as seek a writing of emancipation, write it for them if you are aware of aught of good in them, and bestow upon them of the wealth of God which He hath bestowed upon you."

(The Qur'ān 24:33)

On the other hand, Jesus said or did nothing to pater the slaves or to improve the lot of these miserable creatures.

Political Constitution

Christianity does give some guidance with regard to what Aristotle described as private virtues, but is absolutely silent on the question of political virtues, es. The rests! of the separation of religion and politics in Christianity has been the growth of Machiavellism in the West. Islam, on the other hand, being the last revealed and foreseeing the eventual evolution of humanity, had to formulate a basic code of comprehensive guidance for mankind in all their activities and relations, whether they fall within the public or the private sector. Islam erases social justice and international peace by bringing political, economic and international relations and affairs under the control of religion and ethics and by defining

the basic duties of the individual towards the state and of the state towards the individual and of one State towards another State. It lays down some basic principles which every community is enjoined to adopt and then gives each the liberty to develop its structure according to the needs of the age, provided this super-structure observes the basic principles and remains within their scope.

The first basic principle of the Islamic political system is that the sovereignty of the State rests with God and no legislature or parliament has the right to pass a Law or Act which is contrary to the spirit and letter of the commands the prophet. Thus Islam ensures uniform justice and saves the state and the destinies of the people from being swayed by the whims, shortsighted decisions of the legislators, and the minority group from the brute will of the majority, and the interests of the people as a whole from those of the dominating economic class in the parlia-

ment. The Holy Quran Says :

,"Say: O God Owner of Sovereignty! Thou givest sovereignty unto whom Thou withdrawest sovereignty from whom Thou wilt. Thou exaltest whom Thou wilt and Thou abasest whom Thou wilt, In Thy hand is the good. Lo! Thou art able to do all things."
(3:26)

The second basic principle is that all men are equal before law and in the sight of God. They have equal political rights. The same, law applies to all. in an Islamic ,State no one, not even the head of the state, is above Law. For the breach of any law, even the Caliph can be summoned in the court and punished, if found guilty.

The third basic principle is that all public offices including that of the chief executive, are trusts from God, and the trustees must exercise the authority given to them as per the command of God and for the benefit of the people. As the Head of the State is ap-

pointed by the people, he can also be removed by the people, if they find that he IS carrying on the administration according to the commands of God and in the best interests of the people.

The fourth basic principle is that all pulic matters are to be decided by consultation and after taking into coisideration the views of the citizens or the Islamic State :

"So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them consult with them upon the conduct of affaire. And when thou art resolved, then put thy trust in God Lo! God loveth those who put their trust in Him." (The Quran 3:,159)

"And those who answer the call of their Lofd and establish worship and whose Government is by consent themselves and who spend on others out of what we have bestowed on them." (42:28)

Islam brought into existence the first true democracy in which there was no distinction of free-born and

salve, citizen and serf, and no discrimination on the basis of race or colour, or sex or creed. All are equal before law and enjoy the same rights.

The Economics of Islam

In the economic field, Islam considers all unearned income to be unjust and unlawful. It upholds the dignity of labour. The Prophet said:

"No one eats better food than that which he eats out of the work of his own hands." (Bukhari, 35:15).

In the social order of Islam the possibility of exploitation of man by man is minimized, without the total abolition of private property or enterprise, by the prohibition of monopoly, blackmarketing, hoarding and interest (riba), that is, a fixed extra return for money lent of any purpose. Says the Quran:

"Those who live on interest cannot rise up save as he arises whom the devil hath prostrated by his touch. That is because they say: Trade is just like interest; whereas God permitteth trading and forbid-

deth interest” (2:275).

In order to reduce inequality and make sure that every one gets the basic necessities and has equal opportunities in life, Islam imposes a tax on the capital of the rich for the benefit of the poor. This tax, called Zakat, is different from and in addition to Khairat or voluntary charity. Moreover, the Quran contains frequent and repeated exhortations to the people to spend their wealth for the welfare of others. It says that the profession of faith and the religious devotions of a man who is not actively engaged in works of Mercy are vain and not acceptable before God. And, finally, by its judicious laws of inheritance. Islam makes the concentration of wealth in few hands imposible.

While not ignoring the importance of economic activities in human life, Islam strongly condemns the tendency to judge people by their financial and social status. The mark of a man's worth is not his

wealth but higher morals and greater participation in the works of mercy. Wealth is not an end, but a means of support" to the people. 'The wealth that a man earns is not absolutely his. It is a trust with him from God. He has acquired it by employing the God-given faculties and by the aid and the facilities provided by the society. He must repay his debt to the society and spend as much as possible, out of what he has earned, in the way of God. Above all, in the pursuit of wealth a man must not lose sight of the higher values of life.

Religious freedom

Just as Islam has made the State subject to the same ethical principles as govern individuals and has brought international relations within the scope of morality, making the subjugation and exploitation of one nation by another as reprehensible as the subjugation and exploitation of one man by another, in the same way Islam has ordained justice, equality and

mutual respect in inter-religious affairs and relations. In the Islamic social order all individuals and religious communities are free to follow the religion of their own choice. No individual or religious community has the right to impose his own beliefs on others or to restrict in any way the profession, Preaching and practice, by others of the religion which appeals to them. Says the Holy Quran:

There is no compulsion in religion.” (2:256)

The Islamic attitude towards inter-religious relations is much more than that of mere toleration. Islam enjoins equal faith in the founders of all the great religions of the world. It invites people of other religions to join the Muslims in forming a League of Faiths to uphold the principles of the Unity of God and righteous conduct.

In Muslim countries Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians and Hindus have enjoyed the freedom, which, till recently was totally denied to the non-Christians in

Christendom.

The Universal Brotherhood of Islam

The Islamic belief in the unity of mankind is the corollary of the doctrine of the unity of God. The self-same God is the Creator and Nourisher of the men and women of all nationns, races, colours, creeds and cultures. And hence all mankind may be regarded as God's big family:

"Mankind are one community." (The Quran 2:213)

"All God's creatures are His family, and he is the most beloved of God who tries to do the "greatest good to God's creatures." (Sayings of Muhammad)

Islam rejects all false criteria of superiorly based on race, nationality, colour or language. It makes righteousness and good conduct the only mark of superiority in the sight of God:

"O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female and made you nation and tribes that ye may kiow one another. Lo! the noblest of you, in the

sight of God, is the best In conduct. Lo! God is All-Knowing, All-Aware."(Quran 49-.13)

The Prophet of Islam, commenting on the above verse in the occasion of the Last Pilgrimage, observed:

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

Islam unites all human beings in love and sympathy as brothers. The brotherhood of Islam transcends all geographical and political barriers. Even the strictly religious obligations of Islam, like the congregational prayers, fasting Zakat and pilgrimage to Mecca have the additional function of creating brotherly feelings and equality among all ,sections of Humanity. The Holy Quran says:

“And hold fast, all f you together, to the cable of God, and be not disunited. And remember God's favour unto you: how ye were enemies and He made friendship between yur hearts so that ye became as brother, by His grace; and how ye were upon the brink of an abyss of fire, and fie did save you from it. Thus God maketh clear Ms revelations unto you, that haply ye may be guided.” (3:103)

Thus it will be seen that Islam gives guidance on many matters and aspects of human relations on which Christianity is silent. The prophet Muhammad completed what was left incoi-nplete by Jesus. Islam is the true religion of Jesus, revived by a fresh revelation and perfected to cover all aspects of human action and relations and to give guidance to the people of all times and nations. it is in short a Universal Religion. it does not only respond to ranks devotion-al urges but to human life as a whole. It does not only give us an infallible metaphysics, but also a

comprehensive and sublime code of individual and social ethics, a sound economic system, a just political ideology and many other thing, besides, It is not a solitary star, but a whole solar system, encompassing the whole and illuminating the whole.