

**IMPLICATIONS OF THE ORIGINAL TEACHINGS OF ISLAM
FOR PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT**

A Thesis

Submitted to

**The Faculty of the Graduate School
of The University of Minnesota**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of The Requirements for The Degree
Doctor of Philosophy**

by

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The purpose of this study was to examine the original teachings of Islam in search of valid implications for physical education and sport. An historical overview of Islamic culture, and treatments of its religico-philosophic commitments, concept of education, and concept of body and soul provided the foundations for suggesting the implications of the original teachings of Islam for physical education and sport.

Islam projects man's existence as an ongoing state of "becoming". In this state, Islamic teachings establish an interdependency of body and soul. They conceive of human life as a unified effort of body and soul to express existence. The significant implication of this concept for physical education and sport entails the improvement of both body and soul in such activities. Islam implies that philosophical guide lines for physical education and sport must be in accordance with the goals of man's existence toward a physical, moral, and spiritual piety.

Islam emphasizes the pursuit of knowledge, analysis of past events, establishment of an appropriate goal, determined attitude, and hard work. Islam promotes patience in time of defeat and forgiveness and understanding in time of victory.

Islamic teachings indicate respect for tradition, but not at the expense of the improvement of man's existence. Islamic practices imply that both body and soul together need practice for the improvement of their nature. Islamic teachings imply that learning

in physical education and sport should bear values transferable to the efforts of life generally.

Islam implies that friendship, responsibility, leadership, followership, and moral qualities should be taught with full understanding of their good and bad aspects in physical education and sport. Islamic views confirm the value of organic and neuromuscular development, though the emphasis is on intellectual and social development. Islamic teachings make significant contributions in the promotion of initiative, responsibility, self-confidence, friendship, ethics, democracy, and good citizenship—all of which figure significantly in the conduct of physical education and sport. Islam promotes the concepts of equality and justice and implies that they should be major considerations in human events generally, physical education and sport more particularly.

The Islamic view of teaching and learning is a very active one. Everyone is responsible for participating formally or informally in teaching others what he knows. Teaching should possess sincerity, generosity, motivation, criticism and appraisal. The teacher should also keep abreast of the progress of knowledge.

An overall observation reveals that the implications of the original teachings of Islam for physical education and sport are in general agreement with the views commonly accepted in the West concerning physical education and sport. For the most part, the differences reside principally in the degree of emphasis put on various principles.

Dedicated to His Imperial Majesty
Muhammad Reza Pahlavi Shahanshah Ariamehr
whose personal support of physical education
and sport programs in Iran resulted in my
studies abroad.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Man is a gregarious animal who, for the most part, chooses to live in groups. These groups, which organize themselves into societies, actively strive to improve their knowledge and understanding of life and the universe. They also engage themselves in passing on the accumulated wisdom of their society by a process we term education. According to Benjamin Franklin¹, education is a life process going on not only in the individual, but also in the community, the nation and mankind. The whole of education, for Franklin, was synonymous with the whole of life.

John Dewey considers the educational process an important feature of society and a social process which cannot be separated from the total character and tasks of society.² In a broad sense, he advocates the general aims of education as a process to fulfill the needs of the individual for the purpose of better understanding of the environment, and to equip him to live within the limitations of his society to the best of his potential.³

Both formal and informal education exists in infinite variety within all societies. One of the most basic and widespread

¹Robert Ulich, History of Educational Thought, American Book Company, New York, 1950, p. 236.

²Ibid., p. 318.

³John Dewey, Democracy and Education, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1944, pp. 179-192.

types of education is through religion, which has been a powerful agent for the establishment of values and human conduct in influencing all phases of human life. Theological doctrines have influenced or at least left an impression on most aspects of man's life. Among the world religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism), Islam seems to express more interest in the physical as a valid part of living; and it is more inclined to be concerned with its health and development.⁴

Jean Jacques Rousseau stresses that the educational experience of a child ought to be in harmony with his physical and mental development. Physical education has been recognized as an important contributor to the total educational development of the individual.⁵

Considering the nature of physical education as an eclectic discipline⁶, and the contributions of religion to human development, there seems to be a need for a serious attempt to search for valid implications from religious doctrine and practice. This could provide a new dimension of insight for the existing problems of physical education and sport.

A. Statement of Problem

The purpose of this study is to examine the principles of Islam in search of valid implications concerning physical education

⁴Ulich, op. cit., p. 219.

⁵James A. Baley, Physical Education and the Physical Educator, Allyn and Bacon, Inc., Boston, 1970, pp. 6-12.

⁶Charles C. Covell and Wellman L. France, Philosophy and Principles of Physical Education, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1963, p. 5.

and sport. In this study, only the original teachings and principles of Islam will be considered as the main source of information. Therefore, the various outgrowths of these principles will not be considered a major source of reference.

B. Need for the Study

A review of available literature reveals no research which is directly related to the problem under investigation. Indeed, there are very few works which consider the religious dimension of physical education and sport, and none of these speak to Islamic dispositions on such matters. An extensive attempt to examine the principles of Islam relative to physical education and sport can lead to a new direction for future studies in the field of physical education.

C. Limitations of the Study

George Thomas indicates that religion is primarily a commitment of faith and a way of life based upon it. It is not, most commonly, concerned with a rational demand for an explanation.⁷ On the other hand, philosophy is, largely, a process of critical inquiry that affirms little without subjecting it to close scrutiny by reason.

Neither approach in itself is an exclusively suitable instrument to be implemented in the present investigation. The philosophy of religion, a branch of philosophy stressing the use of logic with respect to religious concepts reveals a more appropriate approach to the problem of this paper.

⁷George F. Thomas, Philosophy and Religious Belief, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1970, p. 9.

George Thomas states:

The philosophy of religion is the examination of religious phenomena to determine the nature and forms of religion and its relation to other aspects of human experience; the clarification of religious concepts and statements; and the evaluation of the truth or falsity of religious beliefs.⁸

Religious statements are usually presented in such a context that they are not directly spoken in reference to the issues of physical education and sport. Consequently, the implications discovered from the religious concepts will not be a mere restatement of the original literature; but rather, a thorough examination of religious concepts related to the issues of physical education and sport, founded on a philosophical use of logic to construct meaningful implications.

The treatise employs an implication approach, for such a method allows for the explicit identification of basic principles and events, as distinct from an implicit recognition of such. It does also, however, encourage an acritical--that is, a purely expository--treatment of the issues at hand which may be regarded as a limitation of the study, albeit an unavoidable one.

Neither is the present effort a comparative analysis of Islamic thought and practice with respect to physical education and sport to other major religions' commitments with respect to such. Though there is some parenthetical reference to such comparisons for the purpose of enhancing an understanding of the Islamic commitments.

It should also be noted that the English translation of

⁸Ibid., p. 10.

all the quotations used in this study from the two books: Nahj al-Balighah and Nahj al-Faqihah are mine from the Iranian translations of the original Arabic.

D. Organization of the Study

- I. Introduction
- II. The Fundamental Nature and Significance of Islam
 - A. Historical Overview
 - B. Religico-Philosophic Commitments of Islam
- III. The Concept of Education in Islam
 - A. Attitude of Islam Towards Education and Scholars
 - B. The Curriculum
 - C. Institutional Provisions for Education
- IV. The Islamic Conception of Self: Body and Soul
 - A. The Concept of Body in Islam
 - B. Attributes of Soul in Islam
- V. Implications of Islam for Physical Education and Sport
 - A. Implications of Islamic Belief Concerning the Philosophy of Physical Education and Sport.
 - B. Implied Contributions of Islam to the General Concepts, Aims and Objectives and Teaching and Learning in Physical Education and Sport.
- VI. Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Chapter II

THE FUNDAMENTAL NATURE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF ISLAM

In order to establish a clear comprehension of the nature and scope of Islamic teachings, it is necessary to come to an understanding of the pre-Islamic conditions, the birth and the religico-philosophic commitments of Islam. The geographical situation, type of people, activities in life, traditional values, intellectual tendencies and other main factors in that culture had created an atmosphere into which Islam was born. Thus, the message of Islam, especially with regard to its originality, becomes more meaningful with an insight into the influences contributing to its birth.

An historical overview of the people of Arabia, their environment and intellectual pursuit, is beneficial in understanding the developmental stages of the birth of Islam. Such an approach gives insight into the religico-philosophic doctrines of Islam in terms of their foundations in previous cultures, the result of long term evolution of ideas concerning them. This information can also be helpful in determining whether or not the doctrines of Islam were introduced to deal with the problems of time, people, and place, or were intended to be onward and universal. Therefore, it is intended to examine the historical development of Arabs in pre-Islam and establish an overview of conditions in which Islamic theology with its religico-philosophic commitments was born.

A. Historical Overview

The Islamic faith grew from Mecca (in Arabia) Westward as well as eastward from its city of origin, started by a proclamation of the prophet Muhammad in the seventh century A. D. Islam has been referred to primarily as the religion of the "East", but if we observe its extension to North Africa and to the "Black Muslims" of the United States, we find this limitation no more valid than regarding Christianity as the religion of the West. In fact, Islamic teaching is based on the historical development of man, and recognizes its role in the course of history and accepts the preceding religions as a chain of guiding revelations for man. The preceding prophets are assumed to have been the servants of God sent for the guidance of mankind. The birth of Islam stands as the completion of the past. With this short introduction, we proceed to discuss the birth of Islam and the setting into which it came on the peninsula of Arabia.

General Description of Arabia Before Islam

Arabia occupies a peninsula measuring approximately twelve hundred miles by nine hundred miles and comprises about one million square miles of territory. It is surrounded on all sides by natural barriers: the waters of the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Red Sea on three sides and the Syrian Desert on the fourth. Isolated by these obstacles, it well deserves the name given by its inhabitants who called it "Al-Jazirah"¹ (The Island).

¹C. E. Farah, Islam, Beliefs and Observances, Banon's Educational Series, Inc., Woodbury, New York City, 1968, p. 17.

If it was an 'island' the usual stereotype of a desert island was the one that it resembled most. With the exception of a small section on the coast, the rest was for the most part uninviting.

Both topographically and culturally, the peninsula was divided into the northern (Qaysī) and southern (Yaman) sections. With the Yamanies, we see the rise of the earliest known civilization in Arabia.² The Southwest corner of the peninsula (the Arabian Felix of the ancients) is blessed with rain and sun. In this section civilization prospered, nourished by agriculture and trade. In the depressions of the Yaman and the Tihāmāh³, peoples such as the Minaeans, the Sabaeans and the Himyarites thrived as early as the second millennium B.C.

Facing the Gulf of Aden on the southwest, and the Red Sea on the southeast, the area was ideally situated for trade--lying as it did midway geographically between the greatest centers of the ancient civilizations. The areas consisted of Mesopotamia, the Nile and Indus river valleys, and the Ethiopian high lands.

It, indeed, carried on a lively and prosperous trade in frankincense and spices, acting as a middle man for the camel caravans going north to Egypt and Syria and for the Romans, until they found a way to by-pass them to deal directly with India.⁴

²Ibid., p. 19.

³Tihāmāh is the lowest lying and most desolated part of Hijāz, Lammens, H., Islam Beliefs and Institutions, Translated by Sir E. Denison Ross, Frank Cass and Company, Ltd., London, 1968, p. 6.

⁴John B. Nass, Man's Religions, MacMillan Company, New York, third edition, 1966, p. 716.

The people of this area were different from those of the rest of the peninsula. Although the northern Bedouin has always professed great pride in his racial origins and purity, in truth, the Arabs of both northern and southern sections were far from homogeneous.

The heathen Arab was extremely race-minded. The purity of his geneology, i.e. of his Arab descent on both sides, was valued, therefore, jealously watched.⁵

According to Biblical and Qur'ānic testimony, the Arabs were descendants of 'Shem', the oldest son of Noah, hence the appellation of Semite is justified. In the South and extreme north, the people are mostly of the Alpine and in the Central and northern parts they belong to the Mediterranean substratum. But, a large percentage of the population of both north and south had a generous mixture of other (mostly Caucasian) racial stocks.⁶

The appellation Arab is traditionally said to be derived from the little town of 'Araba' in the southwest district of Tihāmah where, according to legend, settled Ja'rah the son of Biblical Joktan. More appropriately, the term Arab derived from the Semitic word root referring to 'Nomad'. But, as the trade multiplied they chose to believe that they were descendants either of Qahtān (Joktan) or 'Adnān from a common ancestor Ismael (Ishmael) son of Abraham and Hagar.

In the south the roundheaded, hook-nose native population was diversified by the infusion of Ethiopian blood. In the Northeast,

⁵G. E. Von Grunehaus, Islam, Essay on the nature and growth of a cultural tradition, Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., Broadway House, Carter Lane, London, 1955, p. 66.

⁶Farah, op. cit., p. 17.

Sumerian, Babylonian and Persian elements altered the racial composition of the inhabitants. Also, in Egypt a hamitic strain entered the population.⁷ The southern people spoke a Semitic dialect with Ethiopian affinities that today partly survived in Ethiopia.

North of the comfortable land of the southern horticulturists and farmers is a region called 'al-Rub' al-Khālī' (the empty quarter).

A clam-shelled-shaped tract of red sand, a third of a million square miles in extent, which even the Bedouins avoid.⁸

To the North of this, a desert steppe encircles another desert, the Great Nufūd, which is in the Northwest. Its shifting red and white sands rising in dunes sometimes reaching to one hundred and fifty feet, stretch midway between Damascus and Medina. The steppe is habitable, containing oases and arable valleys. After the sparse season of winter rain hardy vegetation springs from the coarse soil and provides grazing for the camels, sheep, goats and horses of the Bedouins.

Furthest to the north lay the frontiers of the Byzantine and Persian Empires, where buffer states had risen between the unsettled lands of the nomads and these far-flung kingdoms. These small states were supported by their mighty neighbors who found them a convenient way to control the less civilized tribes of the Arabian interior.

However, there is another section of Arabia, the one that

⁷ Nass, op. cit., p. 716.

⁸ Ibid., p. 715.

is most pertinent to the subject under investigation. This part, which is called al-Hijāz, is a mountain range, running southeast to northwest paralleling the Red Sea from Yaman to the Gulf of Aqaba. Rising steeply from the Red Sea, the heights sometimes reach to 10,000 feet, and slope away gradually eastward to the sands of the central desert. The mountains are mostly barren and dry. The grayish landscape in some places is lent variety by tracts of black volcanic rocks, scarred with deeply cut gullies which are cut by flash floods from infrequent violent storms. Intermingled with the high parts are areas of steppe land, its generally harsh appearance softened only after the seasonal rains. Rain falls only at intervals, during winter and spring. Sometimes periods of drought can stretch as long as three years or more. Aside from this there are occasional extremely rainy periods, when short but extraordinarily violent rain storms occur. Then cloudbursts and waterspouts fill the valleys with flash floods and sweep away everything in their path, on occasion, whole encampments with their flocks and herds. There were some oases which could support settlements. The most important ones from north to south were Talwq, Tihāmah, al-'la Fadāq, Medina and Khaybār.

In spite of its generally forbidding topography, this mountainous area has been historically important as the 'highway' connecting the southern lands to the Mediterranean markets. For centuries, camel caravans plodded through the sparse settlements of the Hijāz—through Tā'if, Mecca and Yathrib (Medina), before splitting off northward or southward toward their Egyptian or Syrian destinations. In this process, the caravans enriched these towns, out of proportion to the degree of prosperity that could be expected,

within the natural limitations of that environment.

The people of the northern area were longheaded, wiry nomads, who spoke a pure form of Arabic. They were, by nature, liberty-loving and imaginative. Thousands of years of struggle had schooled them in predatory habits.⁹ This group was called 'Adnānīs or Qaysīs¹⁰ and differed both in speech and customs from their settled and contented brothers who lived in comfortable agricultural settlements below the vacant quarter. They were the nomads, the Bedouins, and the people who gave the area its character and constituted the majority of the population. For, in spite of the fact that large settlements did exist in some places, containing people who had removed themselves from their desert background, the ideals of the Bedouin still ruled them. The settled populations had been unable to develop a culture and ethical system that could overcome their all-prevailing desert heritage.¹¹ These people who stamped their character on the region with an impression which lasted for centuries (until the time of the prophet Muhammad, who broke the bonds of the traditional loyalties and substituted the ties of religion) were a hardy group with general characteristics of self-reliance, loyalty, generosity, courage, intelligence and chivalrousness (if we are to believe the record left to us by their poetry). In truth, they were, if not exactly noble, certainly well adapted to survive the conditions imposed on them by their environment.

⁹Ibid., p. 716.

¹⁰Farah, op. cit., p. 19.

¹¹Von Grunehaum, op. cit., p. 26 and p. 142.

H. Lammens, the French researcher of Arab culture in pre-Islam, describes the Bedouins who constituted the majority of Arab population in the following passage:

They are a preeminently open-minded race with a receptive intelligence...the Bedouin, in spite of his rough appearance can never be mistaken for a man of primitive or barbarian stock. The inclemency of the climate, the privations of a desert life, bring about natural selection and ruthlessly eliminates the weakling. His resolute bearing, his virile appearance, the shrewdness and point of his replies, the ease of bearing with which he receives a guest, rather produce the impression of some gentleman fallen of evil days, some belated descendant of the Biblical patriarchs.¹²

Dependent for subsistence on the animals, they herded, the Bedouins, due to the scarcity of the food supply, were constantly on the move, seeking pasturage for their flocks and good hunting. This mode of life limited their possessions to the bare necessities, only that which could be easily transported and their weapons. Their most valued possessions were their horses and the indispensable camels, which The Holy Qur'ān refers to as the gift of God.¹³ This ungainly looking animal provided milk, meat, hair with which to weave clothes and tents, leather and other items of domestic needs, dung for fuel, and urine which was held to be a valuable medicine for fever and malaria. The nomad lived frugally on a variety of accessible foods. Beside milk and an occasional feast of camel flesh, dates were a staple, supplemented in the proper season with wild artichokes and other uncultivated plants.

¹²H. Lammens, Islam Beliefs and Institutions, translated by Sir E. Denison Ross, Frank Cass and Company, Ltd., London, 1968, p. 6.

¹³The Holy Qur'ān (Sura XVI, Ayats 5-7).

Life was organized according to the tribal system. The tribe was everything in a man's life; his chief protector and provider and the source of his identity. Loyalty to the tribe was his chief obligation. 'Asabiyyah', or clan spirit, was the tribal equivalent of patriotism. Kinship gave him the right of citizenship in his group. Each tribal group was a complete entity, dependent on no one, caring for the needs of its members and fighting for their rights. They could exist as a unit only if each member took his responsibilities seriously, and the threat of exile ensured that he would do so. For, without his tribal group, a man had no backing, he was entitled to no rights outside the bonds of the tribe. The rare individual who had been exiled was an out-cast, preyed upon by all, and was forced to exist as best as he could in a hostile world.

The typical group consisted of the leader (shaykh), his family, other inter-related families, strangers residing or traveling with the group for a period of time in order to have its protection, 'clients', outsiders who had been adopted into the tribe as members, and slaves. The Arabs considered themselves members of the noblest of all nations (khayr al-umam). They had strong aristocratic feelings and refused to take second place to anyone. The Bedouin ideal was manliness (muruwvah) which was expressed in the traits of loyalty, generosity and courage. This was what he strived for. Only the manly virtues could win respect from him.¹⁴

¹⁴ Lammens, op. cit., p. 9.

Where the moral qualities are concerned we must speak with some reserve; they are not on a level with intellectual faculties or with the literary development obtained by the Bedouin. Muru'ah, demanded skill in the martial acts of horsemanship and archery, it required that he be willing, even eager to go to war to defend his tribal rights--mostly to the scarce pasturage and to the scattered wells of semi-brackish water, more valuable than gold, that provided life in a barren wilderness. It demanded that a man protect his women and participate in the raids on other tribes.¹⁵

The Arab felt no scruple in robbing a stranger or a traveler without an official Bedouin protector, if one should stray into tribal territory. The property of a stranger, even an Arab, if not protected by theegis of a tribal community, was regarded as the goods of Allah, fair game and the logical prey of the strongest. Their life, always precarious, elevated warfare and raids to an economic necessity. The tribesman was required to take part in the vendettas which were acts of revenge for the death of a fellow tribesman, or to avenge an insult offered to his relatives. These traditions obliged him also to be extremely hospitable to guests and strangers who might ask his protection. Generosity was also held to be a noble virtue, and the Arab who failed to uphold these desert ideals of hospitality and generosity to those who sought his protection would be held up to ridicule.

All in all, the values of the Arab, nomad or settler, were measured in terms of purity of blood as it flowed in the veins of a long line of noble ancestors, in the eloquence of his tongue, in the power of his sword wielding arm

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 9-12.

and the speed of his mount.¹⁶

Within the tribe the Bedouins were largely 'democratic', to the extent they had any organization at all. Some might prefer the term "anarchistic", for the Bedouin did not care for organized government. Life in the desert had bred an individualistic approach to matters. The Arab had never been in the habit of bowing to any authority, since in the desert everyone was essentially equal.

H. Lammens describes his individuality as follows:

When we call the Bedouin an individualist, we have pointed out the principal source of his failing and summed up in a word the gravest deficiencies in his moral nature. He has never raised himself to the dignity of a "social animal", never established any stable or regular form of authority...only individualism can adequately explain the Bedouin lack of devotion to the common good, of kindness, or mere humanity. The harsh and depressing climate of the desert aggravates his individualistic tendencies. It forces him to live in isolation with his family, to compete with his neighbors over the scanty water supply and meagre pastures, essential to the existence of those flocks on which depend the life of him and his.

The woman possesses all the defects of individualism, and also its doubtful and troublous qualities such as self-confidence, dogged determination, tenacious egotism and rapacity. On the other hand, solitude, by forcing him to rely upon himself alone, by heightening his natural faculties by straining them to give the last ounce of which they are capable, has saved him from lapsing into the common place.¹⁷

Political organizations were not to be found. The tribal leader or shaykh was elected by his people. He usually was a man of wealth as well as one who had proven ability, showed wisdom, and probably possessed some outstanding personal qualities. The shaykh

¹⁶Farah, op. cit., p. 25.

¹⁷Lammens, op. cit., pp.8-9.

would be a senior member of the tribe, for the Arab formula states that authority is transmitted, kabīr ilā kabīr (from elder to elder) sons. It could also pass to an uncle or nephew or even to another clan. Literature indicates that the cases of chiefs whose ancestors to the third degree were successively shaykhs are quoted as phenomenal.

Kalīf Mu'āwyah asked a nomad on what conditions it was possible in the desert to obtain the position of shaykh, and his reply was:

Keep open house; be gentle of speech; make no demands on anyone; show the same cordiality to rich and poor alike. In short, treat all men equal.¹⁸

Another popular proverb states:

The shaykh must make himself a slave, the most humble of all men.¹⁹

In the traditional system of tribal life the shaykh had many duties and few privileges. It was his responsibility to care for the poor, widows and orphans; to provide hospitality to strangers and wayfarers; to maintain order within the tribe and to ensure the payment of the blood money (diyyah) when necessary. He led the tribe into battle, also, for vengeance, booty, tribal honor, or amusement. As a shaykh, he had no executive or legislative functions that would set him apart from the other members of the tribe. There were no ceremonies involved in his position. His advice was offered in the daily tribal councils but carried little more weight because of his position. The recommendation of any wise man or woman was valued as much. He had no extra power to enforce his will. There was no

¹⁸Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 12.

organized law to provide guidance. Blood ties which joined kin to kin in the tribe substituted for the non-existent central authority in the determination of the loyalty of the tribesman.²⁰ The absence of a central government made each tribe a separate state and each tribesman was responsible for both upholding and enforcing what law there was.

Since Arabs lacked a nation-wide system of law (a victim of their constant mobility) each decision was reached individually, perhaps guided by the customs, in regard to such acts as homicide. According to Farah²¹, the aggrieved party served as the instrument to execute justice. The law of "Vendetta", the most sacred and highest law of the desert and the one which helped to maintain a precarious balance of peace, held that the murder of a clansperson must be answered by the death of a member of the murderer's clan. The nearest relative of the slain victim was given the responsibility for avenging the death. In the code of the desert, a wrong must be avenged. If the payment of diyyah was not given, or if it was rejected, war followed. A member could command the protection and support of the entire tribe. Tribal feuds resulting from this method of justice became long and drawn out affairs.

In general, the lore of the Arabs was not extensive. They did not seem to have had much in the way of historical records of their civilization, only legends regarding their origins, their ancestors and some memory of locally important events. Shushtery, in his book Outlines of Islamic Culture, points out that the learning

²⁰Farah, op. cit., p. 24.

²¹Ibid., p. 23.

activities in the life of the Arabs of the pre-Islamic period were confined to poetry, genealogy, astronomy and history, with their "history" largely mythological.²² The pre-Islamic Arabs also had some knowledge of folk medicine.

Since pre-Islamic times the Arabs had been famed for an extensive knowledge of diseases and for their skilled understanding of practical diets, remedies and cures.²³

The pre-Islamic Arabs were also famed for their proverbs (short statements) based on observation or experience. Proverbs were also used extensively in Arabic poetry. They were included according to traditional laws of usage and selected so as to add a touch of popular experience or some reflection on life.

The Arabs lived a life which, because of its harshness and frequent travel, deprived them of the material comforts and possessions they needed to fill a creative void. Von Grunehaun expresses this point adequately in his statement:

Literature, to be exact poetry and prose accounts of tribal affairs, had always been the art of the Arabs par excellence. The incipient stages of the Arabic literary development are hidden from our sight, but the earliest surviving documents—dating approximately from the second half of the fifth century A.D.—are products of a fairly evolved poetical convention well on its way to becoming stereotyped.²⁴

In fact, it was poetry that raised the culture of the Arab community to its highest pinnacle. The poetry which "...emerged from

²² A. M. A. Shushtery, Outlines of Islamic Culture, Historical and Cultural Aspects, forward by Sir Abdul Padeer Kt., Sh. Muhammad Ashref, Kashmire Bazar, Lahore Pakistan, 1966, p. 12.

²³ Ibid., p. 73.

²⁴ Von Grunehaun, op. cit., p. 63.

the spirit of the desert itself..."²⁵ was a spoken art which suited a people who could have few possessions because of their life style.

The Bedouins, though largely illiterate, loved poetry, cultivated it and considered poetical eloquence a precious talent, a gift of the spirits. Arabic was a marvelously flexible literary instrument and its poetry was skillfully constructed, rich in expression, full of energy and passion, and containing excellent rhyme and rhythm. However, it lacked great themes and ideas. There was a great deal of restriction regarding subject, imagery, and the poetical forms which could be used. The poetry of this time was descriptive and realistic. Common subjects were: the description of former campsites, tribal life, nature--such as storm over the desert, praise of one's horse or camel, descriptions of raids, love songs, poems in praise of a hero or patron. Traits considered worthy of praise were: manliness, courage, self-sacrifice, love, hospitality, generosity and the keeping of one's promise. Poetry gave a somewhat idealized picture of the Bedouin and his virtues.

Poetry in this culture served also as a functional type of art which offered an aesthetic experience to its listeners. The Bedouins were easily swayed by the power of speech and rhythm that emerged from an eloquent voice. Poetry provided an incitement to valiant deeds on the battle field. It inspired action in time of attack in war and served as a rallying force in a splintered society. It strengthened the Bedouin's consciousness of an identity that transcended tribal affiliations. The poet was a respected artist who

²⁵Desmond Stewart and the Editors, Early Islam, Time, Inc., New York, 1967, p. 101.

performed other duties. He was the journalist of the time. He was a source of news in an illiterate and fragmented world. He was a publicist and propagandist, praising his patrons and deriding their enemies with potent satire, 'the psychological warfare' of the day. He was a source of inspiration in violent times, a community spokesman and a historian who recorded the noble deeds of his people.

The works of poets received wide dissemination due to the annual fairs held in the larger settlements,²⁶ such as 'Ukāz near Mecca where people from all parts of Arabia would gather to worship and trade. This particular fair lasted twenty-one days, beginning the first of Zul-Qadah (February). The poets made use of these occasions to recite their poems. At Mecca, the poem most appreciated by the listeners was written in gold and hung on the walls of the great temple, the Ka'bah—a singular honor for the authors. These selected poems were known as Mu'allaqāt (suspended). Some of them have survived to this day.²⁷

If a highly perfected language can be considered as a reflection of the soul and spirit of a nation, then the very advanced evolution of the Arab idiom should preclude the possibility of regarding the pre-Islamic Bedouin as a primitive people.²⁸

In spite of its importance as an institution, both aesthetic and functional, and for the glimpse it gives us of Bedouin life, Arab poetry almost totally ignores another facet of life which we might expect it to cover and that is religion. The poetry was almost

²⁶A. M. A. Shushtery, op. cit., p. 110.

²⁷Some of the authors accorded this honor were: Imra al-Qaysī, Tīrfah, 'Umar, son of Kulsum, Zuhayr, Haris, Antarah and Labid.

²⁸Farah, op. cit., p. 7.

totally secular. H. Lammens used the term "light and irreligious" to describe pre-Islamic poetry. It shows us a trace of a religious pre-occupation, but the subject, in its form, is seldom mentioned. The reason for this is not clear. There is speculation that perhaps the accusation made frequently against the Bedouin (even made by the prophet Muhammad himself) that they lacked deep religious sentiment is true. It also is possible that the poetical convention did not permit an excursion into this type of subject matter. Whatever the reason, the proliferation of deities and cults extant during the period created a divisive rather than a unifying force. While the polytheism of the Arabs was far from being of paramount import in their lives, it had some degree of importance to the tribesmen.

Pre-Islamic Religious Activities

A study of the religion of the pre-Islamic Bedouin, particularly those in the Hijāz just prior to the time of the prophet Muhammad, shows many varying local observances, but one characteristic trait is evident. This trait was the popularity of litholatry, the cult of sacred stones or baetuli, which were called "Bayt Allāh" (the house of God). They passed for the representation, and also the dwelling place, of the divinity. The most famous of these stones was the black stone in the Ka'bah in Mecca. This was (and is) a meteorite worshipped by various tribes who believed that it fell from heaven in the time of Adam. It was embedded in the southeast corner of the Ka'bah, a cube-shaped building constructed to house it. This was the holiest shrine in Arabia, already famous before Christ (the Roman historian Diodorus Siculus, ca. 60 B. C., refers to it). The people of the desert came to Mecca in pilgrimage (Hajj) year after year to

worship and to kiss the stone in the hopes of obtaining the blessing of heaven.

Most of the people of Arabia worshipped local gods or goddesses, some were tribal and some presided over a geographical area and commanded worship from all who entered their areas. Although the general impression is that the pagan Arabs worshipped idols, Lammens shed further light on this matter by stating:

If the common definition of idol is accepted an image or representation of deity, made or used as an object of worship (Websters New Collegiate Dictionary--second edition), the early Arabs knew no idols. Its divinities were...stones which took the most varied forms, oddly-shaped blocks, monoliths, erected or strangely sculptured by atmospheric erosion, assuming sometimes the appearance of men, of columns or pylons.²⁹

These sacred stones either remained at their natural sites or else were enclosed in buildings. If not enshrined, they were a part of a holy area and were worshipped with a ritual with features that were common to the various tribes.

The sacred object was usually encircled by a ring of stones which enclosed a sacred area called 'haram'. This area was a sanctuary for all living things within its borders. Men, animals and vegetation all had to be religiously respected; not even branches could be taken from trees within the area. The area also might enclose other things along with the baetuli or in place of it, serving as objects of worship themselves. A sacred tree which was supposed to be the habitation of a god was a common feature. On such a tree would be hung war trophies, offerings and fragments of cloth. A sacred well was usually

²⁹Lammens, op. cit., p. 18.

near that could be used for ritual washing.

Most of the year, these sanctuaries were deserted as the tribes who maintained them (each tribe possessed its own god) wandered with their flocks. On occasion the tribes would assemble at them to offer sacrifices. This was usually in the spring and fall. These sacrifices were preceded by a ritual purification and the participants shaved their heads and maintained a ritual observance. After the sacrifice the victim's blood was poured on the baṭuli or into an opening at the foot. The flesh of the sacrificial animal (camel or sheep) was eaten by the worshippers after which they left the area and the sacred state of holiness (*ḥarām*) and re-entered normal life (*ḥill*--the profane state). Some baṭuli were portable and could be, and sometimes were, carried about in a pavilion of red leather on camels, (recalling the arc of the covenant). This might happen during the pilgrimages and certain religious ceremonies--those following prolonged droughts, for instance and the time of war. On these occasions the object was accompanied by a procession of women--clashing timbrels and chanting. This ended by the ritual seven times circumambulation (*Tawāf*) of the sanctuary. The sacred object was also on occasion kissed as part of the ceremony.

The shaykh was responsible for the tribal rites. There were few temples in Arabia and no real priestly casts. The place was filled by various functionaries: such as, dancers, diviners and guardians of the baṭuli and the sanctuaries. Divination was practiced by means of sacred arrows from which the sooth sayers (*Kāhin* or *Kāhinah*, if female) drew lots to obtain an answer, either affirmative or negative. The *Kāhin*, who held the highest position in the

hierarchy, also presided in the 'istisqā', a ceremony to bring rain. He also accompanied armies, acted as judge and arbiter (Hākīm) foretold events and delivered oracles in a rhymed and rhythmic prose. The Kāhin especially, was credited with secret powers such as conjuring spirits, casting spells, and being able to bring down rain. The Kāhin, like poets, were supposed to be in communication with the spirits of 'Jin'.³⁰ Angels and fairies were other beings who inhabited the unseen world. Nass finds some implicating evidence of latent totemism involved in the respect paid to the gazelle, the eagle, the vulture and the camel.³¹ The list of gods in Arabia would be extremely large, if one would wish to conduct a complete survey, and most of them have survived only as names. Arab paganism had a pantheon of sorts, a group of gods and goddesses, about whom we know comparatively very little. These were accorded the chief portion of attention and had some degree of universal popularity with all the tribes. The most important and most widely recognized deity was Allāh, the god, from the definite article al and Illāh, related to the Hebrew root elohim, and probably from common Semitic "Il" or "El". He was a high god, the creator who resided in the sky and who controlled fate. He had power over life and death. He was also responsible for providing rain, watching over oaths and contracts, and punishing unjust offenses. Also important to the pre-Islamic people were the three daughters of Allāh: al-Lat, al-Manāt

³⁰ Jin was described as beings half demon and half man feared because it could become invisible but subject to death like human. They resembled the definition of "elf".

³¹ Nass, op. cit., p. 71.

and al-'Uzzah. The goddess al-Lat was recorded as early as the time of Herodotus. She was assumed to be a sky goddess--perhaps of the sun. Al-Manāt was the goddess of fate and al-'Uzzah, the strong one, was usually identified with Venus, the morning star. They were the center of phallic worship similar to that of Ishtar and Isis.

Mecca was the seat of the three goddesses and also was the religious center for the desert tribes. Each tribe's god was represented there; over three hundred statues of gods and goddesses filled the interior of the Ka'bah. The Arabs of pre-Islamic Arabia had not developed the concepts of an after-life or of the immortality of soul.

The rise of the Quraysh to power was linked with the rise of Allāh to prominence in the pantheon of Mecca. This ancient god was considered the supreme deity by the pagan tribes of the Mecca regions from earlier times. The trends inclining toward religious centralization were already evident as tribes began to forsake their local deities. Allāh, the supreme god of Mecca, gained more and more non-local support, and the concept of his functions and responsibilities grew accordingly. This centralization of worship resulted in a change of values, whereby the protection of law (the sanctuaries and the sacredness of the Haram) gave way to the protection of Allāh, who had replaced the purely local deities. There are indications that the idea of a supreme god and of laws transcending tribal affiliations were present and growing prior to the preaching of the prophet Muhammad, but it perhaps had not reached a conscious level.

By the time of the prophet Muhammad, there were signs that the traditional religion was in a state of disintegration, although it still had a good deal of strength left. Part of the reason lies

in the impact of foreign influences and part to the dissatisfaction of some Arabs who felt a lack of substance in their religion. Von Grunebaum clears this point by stating:

It would seem that Arab paganism, never systematized or given a philosophic skeleton, had been losing its grip during the sixth century A. D. It had been a faith of great local variations...but everywhere still close to primitive fetishistic forms of worship...there is evidence of a feeling of religious dissatisfaction and of a seeking for something new, something purer and intellectually more substantial than the inherited but luke-warmly held polytheism. The age had begun to be concerned with the hereafter.³²

Some Arabs had already abandoned their native religion in favor of beliefs brought in from outside. Others had branched off on their own, following their own convictions. Among these were "Hanifs" who were monotheistic in belief and lived ascetic lives.

Foreign Elements

Among the outside influences prevalent in Arabia during the sixth century, the most prominent were those of the Jews and Christians, although Ringgren claims that Gnostic and Manichean teachings were also present to some degree.³³

Of the two Biblical religions, perhaps the Christians were least prominent, since their strongest areas were on the borders of the Arab world; Najrān to the north, Yaman, Syria, and Hīrah in Iraq. A small group of Christians had settled in Mecca. They were a mixed group, with varied occupations such as: monks, merchants, doctors, caravan leaders, scribes, etc. Two Christian Arab tribes, namely,

³² Von Grunebaum, op. cit., p. 2.

³³ Ringgren, Helmer and Ake V. Storm, Religions of Mankind, Today and Yesterday, edited by J. C. G. Greig, translated by Niels, L. Lensen, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1967, p. 179.

Jadham and Udrah, migrated in the Hijāz region. Active missionary work among the nomads was carried on by the Jacobites and the Nestorians who had also established churches and schools in towns of the Hijāz.³⁴ Along the caravan routes, there were Christian monasteries which were open to traveling merchants and nomads. At the time of the prophet Muhammad the Christians were themselves involved in fierce disputes on theological questions, one of which was over the use of icons, which later culminated in the iconoclastic controversy.

The presence of Jews in Arabia can be traced to 1200 B.C. when the tribes of Rachel wandered for forty years in the desert of Nufud and Sinai.³⁵ However, it was not until after 136 A.D., when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem after the second Jewish uprising, that Jewish tribes began to be found in the Hijāz in large numbers. By the time of the prophet Muhammad they had settled down and controlled some of the best lands in Arabia—in the oases of Taymah, Khayhar and in Yathrib. In these areas Jews constituted almost half of the population. The unity imparted to them by their religion, their tendency to gather in large settlements and their superior learning and skills, gave them the upperhand in dealing with their Arab neighbors. They were responsible for introducing the intensive cultivation of the oases in western Arabia.³⁶ They also were in control of the trade fairs and the oases of Taymah and Yathrib. They had an advantage over their Arab neighbors because of their monopolies in

³⁴ Farah, op. cit., p. 30.

³⁵ The Holy Bible, (Exodus 3:1, 18:10-12).

³⁶ Nass, op. cit., p. 715.

some areas of trade such as iron and their superior agricultural techniques. Their economic ascendancy brought upon them the jealousy of the Arabs. The Quraysh stock of Mecca resented them and the 'Awas and Khasraj of Yathrib carried on a feud with the Jewish tribes, for the control of the palm tree plantations in the nearby oases.

Geographical and Trade Conditions

In the middle of the sixth century, the Hijāz region of Arabia had three major towns. Yathrib was located in the central section. It was a fertile oasis which supported farms and small villages in a twenty-square-mile area. South of Yathrib, some 250 miles away, was the town of Tā'if. Also, northwest of Tā'if, lying fifty miles inland from the Red Sea, was Mecca.

Since Mecca is of importance in our discussion of the birth of Islam, it will be described in detail. Mecca lies in a rocky ravine surrounded by mountains entirely lacking in vegetation. William Babitho states that:

Even the date palm, the only plant that can endure both freezing and scorching will not grow there. After all the years that the riches of three continents have poured ceaselessly into this wretched place, there are no gardens, and a stunted bush is a civic pride.³⁷

Lammens' comments on this city also expressed the same view in describing Mecca:

...and yet it would be difficult to meet with a more forbidding s-te...gripped, as it were, in a vise between two steep and naked mountains, the town occupies the bottom of a depression, a veritable basin, where in winter the rains of the

³⁷ William Babitho, Twelve Against the Gods, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1929, p. 111.

formidable Tihamah thunderstorms were stored. Such was their violence that periodically they devastated the city and overthrew, ...even the sanctuary of the Ka'ba. In this badly-ventilated corridor scorched all through the endless summer by the pitiless sun of Arabia, without the shelter of a single palm tree, the population, in order to slake their thirst, were reduced to the uncertain flow of the well of Zam Zam, near the Ka'ba. But this hollow, swamp and furnace by turns, coincided with one of the most important stations on the ancient spice route, with the cross roads of the continental routes linking up Yemen, Africa and Syria, and leading to the rich markets of India, coveted and striven for by every nation. This coincidence accounts, in spite of the heavy drawbacks of its climate, for the role played in Arabia by this strange city destined to shelter the cradle of Muhammad and that of Islam.³⁸

In spite of, or perhaps because of its natural drawbacks as a settlement, Mecca became the most prosperous and vitally important of the towns of the Hijāz. There are two factors accounting for this wealth and prominence. One, as mentioned previously, was its favorable location on the caravan routes, and the second was its importance as a religious sanctuary.

In regard to trade, the people of Mecca, located in an "unfortunate valley"³⁹ where agriculture was impossible, because of the poor soil and lack of water, whole heartedly turned to an alternative means of support. Trade became the life blood of the town. Economic considerations, entwining their way into every aspect of life in Mecca, took precedence over everything else.

At first the residents of Mecca traded merely with the passing caravans. But soon they began to participate in the markets of the neighboring settlements, and eventually gained control over

³⁸Lammens, op. cit., pp. 16-17.

³⁹The Holy Qu'rān (Sura XIV, Ayat 40).

them. Extending their influence, the tendrils of trade reached ever outward. They linked themselves to the major markets of the Mediterranean and Middle East. Negotiations concluded commercial treaties with Byzantium, Abyssinia, Persia and Yaman, providing guarantees of safe-conduct and free passage for caravans. From Syria flowed the goods of the Mediterranean world, from Babylonia, the ports of the Persian Gulf, and from Yaman flowed the products of India and the Middle East. Outward bound, the caravans from Mecca carried in return leather, spices, precious essences and metal, especially silver from Arabian mines.

Everyone in Mecca, men and women, participated in commercial enterprises. Personal wealth from fortunes to trivial amounts was invested in banks and shares in the caravans. The entire population of the town might have a financial interest in a caravan. On its return each would have a share, proportional to the profits and investments. Since this would seldom amount to less than fifty percent profit and could even double the investment, there were many who acquired great wealth through this process. In addition to the straightforward caravan investments more esoteric ways of making money were common. Money was gambled on almost anything, such as on the time of arrival of a caravan, speculation was rampant, and the large quantities of unfamiliar foreign money gave experts an opportunity for profit. Bankers collected usurious interest on loans and money changes, and manipulated foreign currencies. Also, stock-brokers and middlemen prospered.

The city of Mecca with its busy and profitable atmosphere gained fame. The Alexandrian geographer Ptolemy seems to have referred

to it as Macraba. The name, perhaps derived from the Sabaeen word *Makarrib* meaning sanctuary, would probably indicate the great age of the Ka'bah.⁴⁰ Because of the presence of this sacred shrine within the borders of Mecca, the area was the focus of pagan worship in pre-Islamic Arabia. The cult of the black stone, revered from antiquity, was not the only thing to draw pilgrims. There were as many as 360 idols in the great temple. Worshipers from various tribes could also pay their respect to their own god as well as to the Arabian pantheon of Allāh and the three goddesses.

By agreement, throughout Arabia, four months of the year were set aside from warfare. During this period annual pilgrimages and trade fairs took place, as well as trips to the holy sanctuary. Along with the pilgrimage, Mecca also hosted a large fair each year which brought a good deal of profit to the merchants of the area.

These excellent conditions did not last. The reopening of the old Egyptian route through the Red Sea had ended the Arab monopoly on the spice trade, bringing India and Somaliland into the picture as trade rivals. After this, Mecca had a hard struggle to survive. The new route had forced down prices and a number of the transport towns of the Hījāz region had been forced to other means of support, mostly agricultural means. But in barren Mecca this alternative was not possible. The city relied mainly on trade contracts, the attraction of pilgrimage to the black stone and the yearly fairs. The loss of either source of revenue could mean economic disaster. There was another problem causing civic tension in Mecca. This was partly due

⁴⁰Lammens, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

to the lack of a code of law and the consequent dependence on the tribal laws and vendettas to deter violent crime and maintain civic order. The other part was the struggle for dominance between two of its major classes, the Umayyad families and the Hashimites. Until the time of the prophet Muhammad, the Quraysh had been the unquestioned leaders in Mecca. This was ever since an ancestor of the prophet Muhammad named Qassay had taken over the 'office' of chief of Mecca and become the guardian of the great temple.

At the time when the prophet Muhammad embarked on his preaching career, this bitter internal feud had left the Quraysh with no strong chief. Mecca at this time was in a state of social-political-economic-religious reorientation. This was the result of the old tribal laws failing to provide a solution for new conditions prevailing in the settled life of Mecca.

As guardians of the Ka'bah and chief beneficiaries of the profits compiled from visitors, the Quraysh did all they could to encourage transients, making pacts with other tribes to insure their safety. This was possible by declaring the surrounding area "Haram" or forbidden to warfare. No blood could be spilled there and pilgrims were obliged to disarm before entering the area. This sacred section kept expanding as the Quraysh sought to maintain the "status quo" by the addition of idols, filling the Ka'bah to enhance the sacredness and attractiveness of the area.

The hordes of visitors attracted to Mecca also deposited new ideas that the Quraysh had to accept in order to keep order in their civic life. The rise of wealth among Quraysh also left a wide gap, separating the richest of the clan from the poorest, and the

simple life of the tribe had given way to a variety of occupations and degrees of wealth in the town. A type of relationship based on class distinctions was developing, accompanied by the injustices that the poor at the bottom of the heap have traditionally suffered. This social injustice increased while the government of Mecca was powerless to alleviate the dissatisfaction directed at them. An oligarchy of the rich and powerful merchants had sprung up to fill the power vacuum present in Mecca preceding the rise of the prophet Muhammad. They held political power and dominated its religious and economic life, deciding policies and forming alliances and trade agreements. However, they had no legislative power and no means of enforcing decisions except by resorting to the old threat of exile.

The Rise of the Prophet Muhammad

Into this transitional, fermenting society, a man named Muhammad was born. It seems every condition prepared the stage for the birth of a true savior: as Farah states, "The role of Muhammad was indeed preordained."⁴¹

The prophet Muhammad was born into the Hashimite clan of the Quraysh. His ancestry was impeccable; his father was the son of Abdūl Mutallib and his mother, Amīnah, was from the Zahrā clan, an influential and well-known family among the Quraysh. Muhammad was their only child. His father, Abdūllāh died in 570⁴² on a journey to Yathrib, before the prophet's birth and his mother died when he was six years of age. The young orphan was then taken by his grandfather,

⁴¹Farah, op. cit., p. 2.

⁴²Lammens, op. cit., p. 24.

Abdūl Mutallib, but on his death in 577, the Prophet was put under the protection of his paternal uncle, Abū Tālib. There is not much known about his early life, but according to legend, also mentioned in The Holy Qu'rān⁴³, at about the age of five, a man in white garments approached him, opened him up and washed his heart.⁴⁴

The prophet Muhammad probably spent his youth helping his uncle, a merchant. He also worked as a shepherd. At the age of twelve, he accompanied his uncle on a trip to Syria where he encountered the Monk Bahīrah who foretold his mission of prophecy.⁴⁵ At the age of twenty, he was a minor participant in the so-called "sacrilegious wars" between the Quraysh and the Qays al-'ilyān, thus named because they broke out during the sacred months forbidden to warfare.

The prophet Muhammad was well thought of in Mecca and esteemed for his truthfulness and trustworthiness. At the age of thirty-five (605 A.C.), he was asked to act as an arbiter in a dispute among the Quraysh that occurred at the time of the rebuilding of Ka'bah. He married an older woman, a wealthy widow named Khadījah, who was of good family in Mecca and to whose attention he had come when he acted as her agent on a caravan trip to Syria. In spite of the common practice of polygamy, prevalent at that time, he lived contentedly with her alone until her death, fifteen years later. He had four surviving children, all girls and all by Khadījah.

In the year of his marriage, the Prophet joined a society

⁴³ The Holy Qu'rān (Sura XLIV, Ayat 1).

⁴⁴ Maxine Rodinson, Muhammad, Tr. Anne Carter, Pantheon Books, New Jersey, 1971, p. 46.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

whose object was the protection of the helpless against the powerful. This was instigated by the robbery in the streets of Mecca of a client of the Quraysh. According to Ameer Ali, "At the insistence of Muḥammad, the descendants of Hashim and of Mutallib and the principal members of the family of Zahrā and Taymah bound themselves by a solemn oath to defend every individual, whether Meccan or stranger, free or slave, from any wrong or injustice to which he might be subjected in Meccan territories...Muḥammad was the principal member of this new association which was founded about 595 A.C. shortly after his marriage."⁴⁶

He was a thoughtful type of person, inclined to solitude and prayer, seemingly disturbed by the conditions present in Mecca. Perhaps his early life as a poor orphan had sensitized him. But, his wealthy status, after his marriage, gave him time to contemplate conditions and meditate on alternatives.

At the age of forty, he passed through his religious awakening becoming convinced that he was commissioned by Allāh. His first communication from Gabriel took place on a Friday in the month of Ramadān (an Arab month), while he was praying on the mountain of Hira. In spite of his initial qualms, when he considered the realities of what he was asked to do, he never hesitated to follow the dictates of his revelations, acting in the face of massive opposition and ridicule. The first converts the prophet Muḥammad made were in his family. His wife, Khadijah, believed in him from the first, his next converts were his adopted son, 'Alī, and his freed slave, Zayd.

⁴⁶ Ali Ameer, Sayyid, The Spirit of Islam, London Christophers, 22 Berners St. W. 1, London, 1946, p. 15.

Amr alī stated:

It is noble feature in the history of the Prophet of Arabia, and one which strongly attests the sincerity of his character, the purity of his teachings, and the intensity of his faith and trust in God, that his nearest relations, his wife, his beloved cousin, and intimate friends, were most thoroughly imbued with the truth of his mission and convinced of his inspiration. Those who knew him best, closest relations and dearest friends, people who lived with him and noted all his movements, were his sincere and devoted followers. If these men and women... had perceived the slightest sign of earthliness, deception, or want of faith in the Teacher himself, Muhammad's hopes of moral regeneration would all have been crumbled to dust in a moment.⁴⁷

In spite of acceptance by his family and some influential Meccans, after three years he still had only thirty followers. He decided to turn his attention from his fellow townsmen to the pilgrims and traders who visited the town. The ingrained polytheism of the Arabs and the religious traditions which surrounded the ancient beliefs was a difficult enough obstacle to surmount, but the hostility of the Quraysh was an even greater barrier. Their opposition expressed itself in everything from encumbrances to outright persecution of his followers.

The prophet Muhammad, protected by 'Alī ibn Abū Tālib, escaped the worst of it but was forced to watch his followers suffer. Finally in the fifth year of his mission he encouraged some to emigrate from Arabia to more hostile environments. The Quraysh, who as time went on were becoming more and more concerned about the possible loss of their privileged position which was threatened by this preacher

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 21.

of democratic ideas and the loss of revenue which his espousal of Monotheism made imminent, decided to take drastic action. In the seventh year a pact was made to exterminate the clans of Hāshim and Mutallib by refusing to buy or sell with them. Fearing an attack, the people of these two clans sealed themselves off in a defensible part of the city and remained there three years—supported by food and provisions smuggled to them by their less bigoted friends outside. During this time the prophet Muhammad emerged to preach only during the sacred months, when violence was forbidden. Finally, in the tenth year, reason prevailed and the pact was annulled.

Soon after this he lost his two strongest supporters, his uncle, Abū Tālib, still unconverted, died, and in the same year he also lost his faithful wife. Saddened by this double loss, discouraged and hopeless about calling the Quraysh from their idolatry, the prophet Muhammad started to look for more fertile territory. A group of pilgrims from Yathrib listened to him and returning home, spread the word of a prophet who had risen among the Arabs. The next year they returned with more to hear his words and took back a disciple to spread the word. In the third year they again returned to invite the Prophet to live in their city. A pact was made. The Quraysh, finding out about it, intensified their persecution and the prophet Muhammad, fearing a massacre, advised his followers to go to Yathrib. This they did in small groups until entire quarters of the town became deserted. The Quraysh, not wishing the prophet Muhammad to escape, debated the best way to deal with him. Assassination was decided to be the best course and to prevent the old law of retribution from being invoked it was decided that a group of men, all from

different families, would strike him simultaneously so that the responsibility for the act would rest upon all and no vengeance could be exacted. However, the night before the plot was to be enacted, the prophet Muhammad and his faithful friend, Abū Bakr, slipped out of town and proceeded to Yathrib, the city that was to take on the name Madīnat al-Nabī (City of the Prophet) for the prophet who would live there the rest of his life. This journey from Mecca in the year 622 was called the Hijrah.

At Medina, the prophet Muhammad became not only a religious leader, but the chief civil authority, and set about trying to unite two differing factions present in the city. A series of wars then commenced which forced him to turn his attention elsewhere. At first brief skirmishes were the most that occurred as the Medinans started to raid the caravans of the Meccans. This led to a battle in which Medina was victorious but the second battle was won by Mecca. Encouraged by victory, the Meccans marched 10,000 men to a siege of Medina but were ultimately defeated by the prophet Muhammad's strategy of encircling the town with a protective ditch and the party returned home in defeat. In 630 the prophet Muhammad marched on Mecca with 10,000 men, and the city surrendered to him. He proved to be a lenient conqueror, who patched up old quarrels and eventually returned to Medina where he directed the further conquest of the hostile desert tribes and towns, accepting their surrender to his command and his religion. At his death, he was aware that for the first time all of Arabia would be under a unified government and religion. He died in 632, rather suddenly, and his death almost caused a split when his followers disagreed on his successor.

After the death of the prophet Muhammad, the leadership of Islam became the responsibility of the succeeding Khalīf. The death of the prophet Muhammad disturbed the unity of the Muslim community. The al-Khilāfat al-Kāmilah,⁴⁸ (the perfect Khilāfate) lasted for four Khalīfs, after the death of the prophet, who themselves as the leaders of Islam, unconsciously were the initiators of disunity and branching in the Islamic community. The Sunnites, the more orthodox branch, followed the traditional Bedouin method of appointing a leader and recognized the first four Khalīfs in the actual order of their selection and leadership after the death of the prophet Muhammad as: Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān and 'Alī. On the other hand, the Shi'ites wanted a dynastic type of succession confined to members of the Prophet's family. They claimed that the best qualified man, a living example of Islamic piety, who had the only right to succeed the prophet Muhammad was 'Alī--the husband of his daughter, Fātimah. Abū Bakr, Muhammad's friend, first chosen Khalīf, spent his reign trying to subdue the revolts that took place among those who had only half-heartedly accepted the new belief. His successor, 'Umar, was also so engaged. The next Khalīf 'Uthmān was succeeded by 'Alī, the Prophet's adopted son and nephew and at his death the succession passed to the House of Umayyad and it was under this branch of the Quraysh that the empire reached its farthest expansion.

B. Religico - Philosophic Commitments of Islam

With reference to the original teaching of Islam, we will now attempt a general discussion focusing on the fundamental religico-

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 128.

philosophic commitments of Islam. As such, reference to highly specific tangential and potentially contradictory interpretations of various aspects of the faith is excluded. That is, an attempt is made throughout this paper to save the originality of ideas and avoid being misdirected by the varied interpretations of later scholars. The ideas under scrutiny here will not be treated separately as isolated concepts, but examined with respect both to the surrounding influences which historically produced the ideas, and to the influences which have been produced as a result of the ideas. Therefore, our treatment is in the light of the pre-Islamic contributions and the contemporary reflections on the birth of the doctrines in Islam. This paper will rely heavily on the teachings of The Holy Qur'ān, since this literature contains the basic and essential foundations of Islamic logic and expression. Therefore, with The Holy Qur'ān as one of our major sources of investigation, our intention is to examine the doctrines and concepts of Islam, and develop a just and clear understanding of the messages rendered by it.

In exploring the traditional Islamic views relative to what we consider philosophical, we find the existence of a deliberate, continuous effort in search of the truth, through the acquisition of knowledge. This age-old pursuit, which according to the Greek tradition, belongs only to man among the whole scope of creation, is an effort which in Islam is indicative of man's quest for wisdom. An important aspect of Islamic thinking has been the emphasis on the direct relationship between the nature of man and the nature of philosophy or between the pursuer of truth and the object pursued. The status of man's existence is influenced by his experiences in an

ongoing process, which Islam refers to as the state of becoming. This situation is responsible for an additional attention to the occurrence of events in light of the past and the conditions of the future. By his most repeated statements, the prophet Muhammad, throughout his teaching, has emphasized analysis of past events, and its relation to the present for future consideration. That is to say, according to Islamic thought, this continuous search after wisdom is historically grounded. The prophet Muhammad states that:

The most ignorant individual is the one who fails to learn from the changes of the happenings in the world.⁴⁹

In search of a clear understanding of Islamic ideology, and with a deliberate effort to preserve the originality of ideas, it is essential to trust the development of ideas in a historical continuum, starting in the pre-Islamic era and ending at what we consider the "intentional period". The intentional period is the period during which the true originality of Islamic ideas had not yet been lost in the proliferation of different interpretations and fresh formulations on the part of later scholars.

In this section some of the major significant doctrines of Islam will be discussed in detail, also, there will be an attempt to identify and discuss the philosophical tendencies of Islam, so as to develop a better understanding of the principles and logic of this Eastern theology. Knowledge of the basic fundamental beliefs of Islam will enable us to examine them in order to draw from them implications concerning physical education and sport.

⁴⁹Nahj al-Faṣāḥah, (collection of The Holy Messenger's Aphorisms), Iranian translation by Abū al-Qāsim Pāyandah, Jāvidān Press and Publisher, Tehran, 1974, p. 73, verse 379.

Allāh and His Creation

Islam announces a clear message, founded on a proclamation of a natural, universal faith. This message is based exclusively on the existence of one God who by his grace unfolds his divine teaching to his selected creature, man. According to Islamic teaching, God manifests his divinity in man through a chosen few prophets, who serve as the messengers of His Divine Revelation, from the beginning of man's creation.

Islam, like the other two great monotheistic religions, Judaism and Christianity, affirms the absolute unity of God as its fundamental principle. This has been repeatedly emphasized throughout the revelations reflected in the teaching of The Holy Qur'ān.

"There is no God but He..."⁵⁰

Allāh⁵¹ according to Islam is an infinite entity who is superior to any thing finite. He has no beginning and no end, He creates all and is not created by any and He is not confined in time and space.

"...He is God alone!
God the Eternal!
He begets none and is
not begotten!
Nor is there like unto
him anyone"⁵²

⁵⁰The Holy Qur'ān (Sura II, Ayat 163).

⁵¹At the beginning, during or at the end of the chapters of The Holy Qur'ān appears fragmentary and detailed descriptions of God called "Allāh". Allāh has similar characteristics of the concept of God in Judaism and Christianity, as the absolute source of creation and concern about the welfare of man.

⁵²The Holy Qur'ān (Sura CXII, Ayat 3).

The Islamic revelation in The Holy Qur'ān strongly advocates that the omnipotent Allāh is the sole creator of the Cosmos. Moreover, the Cosmos is the realm, or order which is governed by laws decreed exclusively by Allāh. Existence of the universe and its order is used as a strong proof of Allāh's existence and his perfect nature (much as in the case of the cosmological argument of Aristotle):

In proving the existence of a perfect God to Mufiqil (a close associate), Ja'far Ṣādiq,⁵³ stated that the first reason for the existence of God is the harmonious organization and the perfect order of everything in universe that in its entirety without a speck of a flaw are situated in their proper place. The logical and perfect order in universe indicates that our world has been created meticulously with precision and logic. The dependence of cooperation of living creatures on the face of the earth indicates that their creator is one, who related them so closely together and depended them on one another.⁵⁴

Allāh, alone, is the Lord of this creation which includes heaven and earth.

His throne reacheth over the heavens and earth,
and the upholding of them both burdeneth Him
not...⁵⁵

He created the sun and the moon, and stars
subjected to laws by His behest.⁵⁶

The Holy Qur'ān repeatedly confirms the reality of God and reminds us of Allāh by referring to Him, in different chapters, as The Creator, The Source of Power, The Beauty, The Law, The Truth, The Goodness, and

⁵³ Ja'far Ṣādiq was the sixth Imām (from the twelve successors of the prophet Muḥammad) whose practice of truthfulness created the title of Ṣādiq (truthful).

⁵⁴ Faḍl-Allāh Kumpānī, Hadrat Ṣādiq Alayh al-Salām, Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmī, Tehran, Iran, 1973, p. 153.

⁵⁵ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura II, Ayat, 225).

⁵⁶ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura II, Ayat, 225).

The Justice. Allāh is, however, the absolutely perfect Being, and is in virtue of this, ineffable. That is, an ascription of qualities to Him goes as a limitation of Him which is contrary to His fundamental nature. Reference to these terms, then, qualifies as an attempt to express His infinite nature in the finite language of man. Attempting to create some understanding of Him, The Holy Qu'rān states:

...The parachel of His light is as if there were a nich and within it lamp, the lamp enclosed in a glass; glass as if it were a brilliant star lit from a blessed tree, an olive; neither of the East nor of the West whose oil is well-nigh, luminous, though fire scarcely touches it; light upon light...⁵⁷

As The Best Schemer, He is The Best Creator; as The Best Authority, He is the Best Ruler; and as The End, He is the End of the Cosmos.

Man and His Relationship With Allāh

According to Islamic faith, Allāh, as the Lord of Creations, has created man from His own spirit. He has extended His grace to man, has enabled him to be linguistic in order to utilize his mind and tongue for the acquisition of knowledge and has put him on earth as His representative. In The Holy Qur'ān the definition of man is secured as the image of Allāh. Man comes from Allāh and returns to Him upon his death. In short, Allāh chooses man over the whole realm of creation, including the angels, to be his representatives on earth. Yet, because of the grace of Allāh, man has the gift of free choice which in turn allows for the committing of moral sin against His Divine will. The Holy Qur'ān plainly clarifies that Allāh must have

⁵⁷The Holy Qur'ān (Sura XXIV, Ayat 35).

had advance knowledge of the nature of man, yet He chose man over other beings despite his obvious imperfection.

In the realm of creations man is the final being who has come to his existence from nothing. Man, in essence, possesses a unique characteristic in his finite existence in this world. This is ~~a. h. l. i. s. s. a. c. s. s. o. m.~~ having the touch of the spirit of Allāh. He also has the quality of 'beyond-this-world' which lies in his soul. Man is a physical and spiritual being. His physical is bound to the earthly needs, but his soul, which is in control of body, has divine origin, giving it a quality beyond the limitations of this world.

According to The Holy Qur'ān, man is a physical and spiritual being who possesses an inclination to find his source of creation, and upon his conviction and the grace of Allāh, he will strive towards spiritual unity with Allāh. Being a part of Him and carrying the responsibility of representing Him on earth, man must channel his effort to understand the Divine Will of Allāh and face up to his duties leading to unity with Him. Allāh is the source of justice and through the process of 'reward'⁵⁸ for confirmative behavior to His Divine Will, and 'punishment'⁵⁹ for deviation from it, dispenses justice. This justice is done on earth as well as in the final day of judgement.

To be a good Muslim is to be a man totally submitting to the Divine Will of Allāh. Potentially, anyone who believes in the

⁵⁸ Reward in Islam refers to good health and prosperity in this world, provided by Allāh and the permission to reside in heaven after this life.

⁵⁹ Punishment in Islam is the cause of adversities and problems in this world as well as condemnation to hell.

absolute oneness of Allāh as the Lord of all the creations is a Muslim. But whoever submits to the infinite will of Allāh and follows his path and gets nourishment from His Divine guidance as the Absolute Authority is an actual Muslim. Therefore, in Islamic consciousness Allāh is an Eternal Entity, both Absolute Transcendence and Absolute Immanence. Because of his Absolute Transcendence, his nature is utterly different from any physical realm known to man. In this context The Holy Qur'ān confirms the teaching of Jesus as a Divine Act of God and refers to him as no more than a great prophet, and so rejects the 'Trinity'.⁶⁰

Islam has ascribed a special attribute to man which distinguishes him from any other part of creation and is the fundamental characteristic required to establish a relationship with Allāh. This attribute is the quality of experiencing the state of non-physical being. This state in Islamic theology is used in two contexts, one devoted to spirit (rūh) and the other to soul (nafs). Exploring over a dozen of the passages of The Holy Qur'ān which utilize the two words rūh and nafs, we find rūh has a definite spiritual connotation which falls outside the comprehension of man, whereas nafs lacks this quality and yet its existence apparently indicates the difference between Allāh and man. Nafs is the force controlling action which in some respect initiates sin. Man, who is of a finite substance, created out of nothingness, is limited in his knowledge and awareness of "spirit".⁶¹ Spirit, which is the essential ground of man's relation with Allāh, comes, as does all else, from Allāh. In this respect,

⁶⁰Trinity is a Christian doctrine, refused in Islam, which considers Jesus as the Father (God), Son and the Holy Spirit.

⁶¹The Holy Qur'ān (Sura XVII, Ayat 85).

the teachings of the Old Testament proclaiming that man as a finite creature is dependent on God's spirit (spirit denoting the fundamental criterion for the life of man) is confirmed by The Holy Qur'ān.

"To give man life, God breathed into man from His own Divine Spirit."⁶²

This spirit illuminates the mind of man on the route of understanding his Lord, and it serves as the common ground of communication with Him. Therefore, spirit is the source of Divine qualities in man. In conclusion, the spirit is from Allāh and it is the source of man's existence. Since it is from Allāh it must be nourished by goodness and rightfulness, which in turn clarifies the path of man's conduct in life. The most significant point is that since spirit is the divine reason for man's existence and meaningful life, when man, through an extensive devotion, dedication and search, becomes conscious of his own spiritual being, in turn he also becomes conscious of Allāh. This achievement is permitted to no other creation and man is the only creature with this attribute establishing unity and telepathy with Allāh.

According to The Holy Qur'ān, "soul" stipulates a number of significations. As an important part of man's meaningful existence, soul is referred to as an original substance establishing the equality of man. Allāh reveals to us through The Holy Qur'ān that all men have been created from one soul.⁶³ This equality of man is one of the fundamental teachings of Islam which appealed to the mass of the

⁶²The Holy Qur'ān (Sura XV, Ayat 29).

⁶³The Holy Qur'ān (Sura II, Ayat 68).

Arab community.⁶⁴ In another passage, soul is referred to as a person: the mixture of different qualities in man.⁶⁵ Occasionally The Holy Qur'ān takes the position of referring to soul as the principle. This principle, sometimes by initiating sinful action, is a source of conflict with the Divine Will of Allāh which is all goodness.⁶⁶ According to the divine teaching of The Holy Qur'ān, man is much more than a body with physical needs that influence his behavior. Man is described as the free finite being whose existence is the outcome of the unification of his body and soul.

To determine the mysterious and unique relationship of man and Allāh in Islamic theology one must understand the nature of their communication. This communication appears in direct lines without the need for an intermediate representative. Sincere enthusiasm is the only pre-requisite for the establishment of such a connection. Since Allāh is everywhere, sees all the unseen, hears all the unheard and is all knowing, he therefore needs no intercession. Allāh is equally interested in everyone's affairs. In Islam, one can conduct prayer, exhibit his faithfulness, implore for assistance, sincerely repent, beg for forgiveness, offer his gratitude and meditate anywhere, anytime and under any feasible condition. There is no need for a mediator. Allāh is manifested in every physical and spiritual concern of man. Man should actively desire and strive through his limited potential of knowing to recognize Allāh's signs rendered to

⁶⁴ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura IV, Ayat 1).

⁶⁵ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura V, Ayat 45).

⁶⁶ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura XXV, Ayat 68).

him. Establishing an awareness of these signs, man should willingly accept a complete submission to them and through repeated practice elevate his spirit to the essential state of undoubtfulness. The spiritual inclination of man for the unity with Allāh is not enough for the establishment of such connection. Knowledge and wisdom provide an insight which is the key to such unity.

Disagreeing with the tragic assumption of original sin and the connotation of man's tendency of choosing against the Divine Will of God (a Christian theological doctrine which is not accepted by Islam), Islam recognizes the intellectual limitation of man unable to reach Allāh by himself. Instead, Allāh, due to his divine love for man, creates every infant with an instinctive inclination toward Himself. Allāh avails His divine knowledge to man by revealing through a chosen line of prophecy, by Wahy⁶⁷, and by bringing justice to man. Historical events and their implications are vivid evidence of The Divine Justice. Through the process of reward and punishment Allāh brings justice to man, causing happiness or sorrow.

Finally we can observe in the context of The Holy Qur'ān and the proclamations of Islamic theology that there exist four types of relationships between Allāh and man:

⁶⁷Wahy by the Arabic lexicons usually means revelation with definite possession of three qualifications:

- a. It is a one way communication to a person (by one).
- b. It is not necessarily verbal, although words may be used. Its signs are not always linguistic.
- c. There is always a sense of mysteriousness, secrecy and privacy attached to it. In other words, this is an esoteric type of communication.

T. Izutsu, God and Man In The Qur'ān, The Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, Tokyo, 1964, pp. 156-184.

- a. Ontological relation: Between Allāh as the ultimate source of human existence and man as His creation and representative on earth: Allāh is King; man is His ambassador. This is a creator-creature type of relationship.
- b. A two-way communication in a close and undisturbed manner between Allāh and man. Allāh reveals to man by "Wahy" and man recognizes his signs and strives to reach him through his prayers.
- c. A relationship of Lord-servant is also evident by the demands of Islam. All concepts referring to this Lord involve absolute supremacy (all power, all knowing, all justice, etc.) and all concepts referring to man suggest a relationship to master (humility, modesty, obedience, etc.). These attributes of man are always in the state of conflict by opposing attributes (self-sufficiency, haughtiness, arrogance, etc.).
- d. The fourth relationship can be best characterized as the ethical relation. Here Allāh stands at the height of virtues with His infinite goodness, mercy, forgiveness, benevolence, and man on the bottom with his poor and imperfect imitation of such attributes.

The relation of Allāh and man is fundamentally a holy process which in all phases brings spiritual satisfaction to man. Allāh reveals to selected men (prophets) in an attempt to create awareness of His Divine Reality and His Divine Will.

Prophecy

Islamic doctrine on prophecy takes the position that the Divine Revelation, as the openness and love of Allāh for man, has been an ongoing process. Historically, man will be brought to justice in this world as well as in the final day of judgement at the end of this world. Man, historically, has never been absolutely unaware of this justice. Allāh has always revealed Himself to man through the three methods of communication already discussed. Revelation of Allāh to man, through his selected messengers according to the Islamic line of reasoning and based on the teachings of The Holy Qur'ān, has started from the beginning with Adam and has continued in an organic line of prophecy. This notion of prophecy is a concept which is supposed to be universal and not confined to any man made boundary. The long list of chosen men, according to The Holy Qur'ān, includes Abraham, the father of faith; Moses, the father of law; Christ, the father of love; and it ends with the prophet Muhammad, the father of reflection.⁶⁸

And what has been revealed to Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob,...and what was brought to Moses and Jesus and what was brought unto the prophets from their Lord; we will not distinguish between anyone of them and unto Him are we resigned.⁶⁹

Supported by the implicit faith that the Divine Revelation is open to all mankind with no limitation of time and place, Allāh is a universal God who appears to all men everywhere.

Islam takes the position that Divine Revelation through the

⁶⁸In the Content of The Holy Qur'ān, Chapter II, these prophets with their attributes have been mentioned by referring to historical events.

⁶⁹The Holy Qur'ān (Sura II, Ayat 130).

organic chain of prophecy ends with the prophet Muḥammad. The rational reflection and the light of revelation through the chosen prophet Muḥammad is of a synthesizing nature--it supplements the teachings of the religion of law (Judaism) and the teachings of the religion of love (Christianity), and claims to be, in part, inclusive of both love and law. This synthesis is manifested to man's imperfect understanding through Divine teachings of The Holy Qur'ān.

However, discontinuation of the chain of prophecy does not denote the termination of the line of communication between Allāh and man. Nor does the openness of God to man conclude with the prophet Muḥammad. There is also no implication that man's contemplation on the Divine reality must be exclusively restricted to the explicit teachings of The Holy Qur'ān. Man is constantly encouraged to broaden the scope of his understanding of the Reality of Allāh by any attainable and practical means in his power. It is, however, proclaimed that the key to the kingdom of God has been provided by Islam. All mankind is urged to submerge themselves spiritually in the grace of The Infinite Reality of Allāh, for Allāh has provided an implicit pattern that facilitates the everlasting horizon of His relation with man, a pattern that invites limitless reflection on the part of man.

In Islam, the prophet is considered a holy man, a selected man with an heightened spiritual consciousness, but without Allāh's divinity. In this respect, The Holy Qur'ān condemns the teaching of Christianity that applies any godly divinity to Jesus. The Holy Qur'ān claims that "We sent none as our apostles before Thee, other than men unto whom we revealed our will".⁷⁰ The prophet Muḥammad, aware of his

⁷⁰The Holy Qur'an (Sura XXI, Ayat 25).

position, states:

I am a human like you. When I instruct you about a religious matter follow it (meaning that it has the source of Divine Revelation). When I instruct you about other matters, I am another man like you.⁷¹

However, Allāh further maintains that, knowing the ambitious tendencies in man, he has supplied His selected messengers with a special ability that serves as a sign to man. This supernatural ability is referred to as "miracles" which are actions or events that apparently contradict the knowledge of man. Islam regards the miracles of prophets as an attribute which implies their connection with Divine origin. In the pages of The Holy Qur'ān there are references to the miracles exhibited by various prophets. Some of these are Moses' well-known act of redirecting the river to save his followers, the healing power of Jesus, and the revelatory power of The Holy Qur'ān, a Divine Revelation from the lips of an illiterate man (the prophet Muhammad). Specific examples of miracles of prophets include Jesus' ability to speak in the cradle⁷², and his fashioning a live bird out of clay⁷³ (the assertion of these specific miracles of Jesus does not appear in The Holy Bible). The miracles, according to the Islamic explanation, are not to be requested by man; rather, their manifestation is in accordance with the will of Allāh. The miracle of the prophet Muhammad in the language of Islam is described by C. Cragg as:

⁷¹ Nahj al-Faṣāḥah, op. cit., p. 190.

⁷² The Holy Qur'ān (Sura XIX, Ayats 30-34 and Sura V, Ayat 109).

⁷³ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura III, Ayat 43 and Sura V, Ayat 110).

The quality of matchless eloquence attaching to the Qur'ān as revelation, whereby for Islam, it constitutes a literary miracle; its style as evidence of its authenticity, Muhammad being unlettered.⁷⁴

Muslims believe that the content of The Holy Qur'ān—its language, quality and its form or worth—is matchless and incomparable to any scripture known to man. This superlative eloquence is regarded in orthodox circles as the convincing evidence of its Divine origin. Its significance also is embedded in the fact The Holy Qur'ān was revealed to the prophet Muhammad and was spoken from the lips of a man who did not possess the necessary poetic competence and was illiterate.⁷⁵ Also the inclusive quality of The Holy Qur'ān refers to the prophet Muhammad as the mouthpiece of the pre-existing scripture, given to him by the experience of Wahy (revelation) which covers both substance and style. This heavenly utterance of the prophet Muhammad in composition of the Divine Revelation is claimed by Islam to be absolutely impossible to duplicate. This book of Divine Revelations was used by the prophet Muhammad in a challenge to non-believers to produce several chapters or verses like it. The Holy Qur'ān possesses some answers to the non-believers' demand for miracles from the prophet Muhammad:

Though a Qur'ān were revealed by which the mountains should be removed or the earth cleared in sunder, or the dead be caused

⁷⁴ Kenneth Cragg, The House of Islam, Dickenson Publishing company, Belmont, California, 1969, p. 102.

⁷⁵ It was widely understood that illiterate indicated the actual ability of reading and writing, so to mean that he was the unscriptured.

to speak⁷⁶, it would be in vain.⁷⁷

The holy book was not the only scripture available to man. The Holy Qur'ān claims that there were other similar scriptures but they were either not as complete or the victim of man's fantasy. The Holy Qur'ān as a miraculous sign confirms its earlier appearance to man in the form of the Old Testament, but it steps beyond the earlier contents of teaching and corrects the misleading concepts deposited by man in the Divine Revelations.

All this is in earlier scripture, the scripture of Abraham and Moses...⁷⁸

Before (The Holy Qur'ān) the book of Moses was revealed, a guide and a blessing to all men. This book (The Holy Qur'ān) confirms it.⁷⁹

Finally, we can determine that prophecy, according to Islam, has revealed its conclusion in its entirety with the prophet Muhammad. The figures of this organic chain were not supposed to be more than human beings; rather, in the light that Allāh's world of Divinity was revealed through them, they represented extreme elevations of the human intellect. As a result, we find the ultimate glory belongs to Allāh and Allāh alone.

⁷⁶ These are miracles which the Quraysh required of the prophet Muhammad, demanding that he would, by the power of his Qur'ān either remove the mountains from about Mecca, that they might have delicious gardens in their room; or that he would oblige the wind to transport them with their merchandise to Syria; or else raise to life Kosai Ibn-Kelab, (Chapter VIII of The Holy Qur'ān) and others of their ancestors to bear witness to him where upon this passage was revealed.

⁷⁷ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura 13, Ayat 30).

⁷⁸ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura LXXXIV, Ayat 18).

⁷⁹ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura XLXI, Ayat 12).

Man's Freedom of Will

In order to determine the doctrines of Islam in regard to free will, it is necessary to establish the nature and meaning of 'free will' from which we draw inferences. Determinism, which is the antithesis of the doctrine of free will, holds that acts are predestined and that the choice of man cannot change the course of events. But freedom of will implies that acts are determined by the free choice of man. In avoidance of these two extreme notions--the denial of freedom by determinism and the assertion of unpredictable freedom by indeterminism--C. A. Campbell, whose explanation of free will has gained much respect, states that man is able to produce an effort to choose responsible action which is valued moral or immoral.⁸⁰ But Campbell also points out that some actions, even though they appear to lend themselves to the notion of freedom of will, are already determined by the environmental and the conditional indoctrination of man. In this respect, according to Campbell, a man can be morally praised or blamed for an act only if he could have done otherwise.⁸¹

Islam offers a complex explanation for the freedom of man. According to Islam, Allāh is all knowing of what is going to happen and He is in sole control of the entire happenings of His creation, yet, He permits the course of action to insure man's freedom of choice. On the other hand, man's lack of knowledge of his standing entitles him to strive honestly toward the divine will. Allāh, being so merciful, recognizes this effort and considers it in His Divine

⁸⁰ Thomas, op. cit., p. 306.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 307.

Justice. The Holy Qur'ān specifically states that Allāh must have known the nature of human choice and his inevitable mistakes due to his limitations.⁸²

The overwhelming Islamic insistence that man strives to obtain knowledge and thereby elevate his intellectual capacity is directly associated with the nature of man's freedom of choice. The task of interpreting the historical significance, is to comprehend the reality, divinity and will of Allāh. Then, man is supposed to spiritually strive for piety, which is a pre-requisite to unity with Allāh, and requires countless and continuous selection by man. The Holy Qur'ān recognizes that in control of human action, is the ground of selfishness and consequently the principle of evil in man (all men, according to The Holy Qur'ān, have been created from one soul—a divine origin). Man, a free being (symbolized by Adam), composed of body and soul, commits moral sin against the Divine Will of Allāh. But the grace of Allāh is open to all men, even after the fall of man against the Divine Will. The dialogue of The Holy Qur'ān, referring to specific historical events, persuades man to increase the scope of his intellectual capability, in order to use properly his free will.

Islam coordinates historically established religious ideas by implying that Allāh first teaches the law, not only for man's understanding of universe, but as a guide to his pattern of external being in the world known to him. He then teaches love, not only for man's internal foundation of his interactions, but as a key to the

⁸²The Holy Qur'ān (Sura II, Ayat 30).

respect of others as selves in the temporal order. Finally, He teaches reason not only for its significance in synthesizing love and the laws, but also as an essential tool of self-determination in accordance with the Divine Will of Allāh.

According to the teachings of The Holy Qur'ān, man, realizing the consequence of his judgements and its impact on his existence, is a free being. But with this freedom he must bear the responsibility of looking out for his own good. Allāh could choose for him and man would be saved; but freedom is an attribute entrusted to man to determine his own salvation in the constant conflict with evil. At first glance, it seems contradictory to expect man to strive for his own salvation and be judged by his action (a doctrine that is the foundation of Islamic morality), whereas his entire action is fore-known by an all-powerful will. The solution lies in the lines of The Holy Qur'ān with regard to the expression of absolution of the Divine Will and the assertion of absolute liberty for human deliberation: "...and who created all things, and determined respecting the same with absolute determination".⁸³

"...God is pleased to make your burdens light, inasmuch as man's by nature infirm...God changes not as to what concerns any people until they change in respect to what depends upon themselves".⁸⁴

Man, lacking perfection, entrusted with free will can commit sin. The consequence of moral sin and misrepresentation of the Divine reality of Allāh on earth is not immediately sensed. That is

⁸³ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura XV, Ayat II).

⁸⁴ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura XIII, Ayat II).

one of the reasons that man should analyze his actions in terms of the revealed will of Allāh. This, however, is not the only method by which Allāh restores justice.

"God punishes whom He will, and pardons whom He will"⁸⁵

This uncertainty is left in Islamic theology, that when one does not realize the will of Allāh, one is lost and may not even recognize when one is being punished or how one stands in the Divine Court of Justice. There also is a final justice at the end of the world known to man, the day of judgement. In Islamic theology man is absolute monarch of his own conduct, within the limitation of his existence. He is undoubtedly responsible for his use of the power with which he has been endowed. There is an available Divine assistance at his disposal, but he falls or rises according to his own inclinations and his own directed course of actions. In comparison with Christianity, one can observe a significant difference. A Muslim is a free agent who comes from the spirit of Allāh and is persuaded to strive for unity with his creator. The responsibility of this unity lies entirely with him. The Christian doctrine of free will, on the other hand, has the agent acting by his inherited nature against the will of God and needing assistance beyond his own to attain his salvation.

In order for man to be united with Allāh he is to be, not only consciously an active participant in his religious activities, but he must also carry his faith farther into the conduct of his entire life. But, the acquisition of this religious consciousness and activity is left to his free will since according to Campbell

⁸⁵ The Holy Qur'ān, (Sura V, Ayat 18).

man can choose otherwise, as many people in fact do.

Man As An Ethical Entity

The birth of Islam in the seventh century, in Arabia, emphatically marks one of the most radical human reforms through religion that has ever appeared among Eastern civilizations. The Holy Qur'an, through its presentation of past historical events, making an example of precedents, vividly describes the conflict between the traditional and already respected tribal ethics and the new ideals of life presented by Islam. This bitter feud caused a gradual weakening of the old system and the rise of the Muslim code of ethics. With regard to ethical thinking, the conflict of pre-Islamic norms and the more recent teachings is an excellent base for the study of the birth and growth of morality in Islam. However, this new code of ethics was not absolutely fresh in its entirety. The strange beliefs connected with the worship of idols were condemned and exposed on the basis of their natural tendency towards polytheism, which was incompatible to the Divine Revelation of one Lord of the entire creation. Naturally, this was not the substance of all the traditional beliefs. Islam, with some modification in content and style, incorporated some of the compatible ideas into the new code with moral coloring. Islam, in light of The Holy Qur'an shows an awareness of other existing codes of ethics. But in regard to them, it makes judgement and finds them not up to date and in accordance with the realm of Divine ethics. Islam confirms the authority of the Ten Commandments, but takes the position that they are only a first step in the process of recurring divine salvation. They are concerned basically with the earthly needs of man. But

Islam rejects the authenticity of what to them appeared to be stories concerning the lives of the prophets in the early section of The Old Testament. Islam claims that its moral quality and quantity is greater than any previous faith known to man.⁸⁶

Studying the very nature of Qur'ānic revelation in regard to the right conduct of a free being, T. Izutsu has unfolded three distinct layers of moral conduct.⁸⁷ He categorizes the ethical expectations indicated in The Holy Qur'ān into three different moral concepts.

- a. Those which refer to or described the ethical nature of Allāh.
- b. Those that indicate various aspects of the fundamental attitude of man towards Allāh, the mighty creator of all.
- c. Those which refer to principles and rules of moral conduct, regulating the ethical interaction among men who belong to, and live within, the religious community of Islam.

The first group contains the ethical virtues of Allāh which denotes the nature of His reality, divinity and His attributes: for example, 'Merciful', 'Benevolent', 'Just', 'Supreme', 'Majestic'. Allāh is considered in the literature of The Holy Qur'ān as an ethical entity; that is, the one defined as ethical perfection. In reference to the fundamental inclination of man toward Allāh, described previously, man

⁸⁶"According to Hadīth (tradition, Judaism possess seventy-one attributes, Christianity seventy-two and Islam seventy-three". The numbers do not indicate the actual counting but they are a figure of speech. H. Massi, Islam, translated by H. Ebid, New York, 1938, p. 175.

⁸⁷Tashokiko Izutsu, Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'ān, McGill University Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University press, Montreal, 1966, pp. 17-18.

is urged by the Muslim logic to imitate the divine attributes of his Lord in conducting his own life.

The suggested ethical codes have been the product of Muslim theologians, reviewing the divine ethics reflected in the teachings of The Holy Qur'ān and preaching them inside and outside their religious activities. Even though this group of ethical inferences facilitates the understanding of the nature of Allāh, it is also an influence on the effort of man to attain his own salvation.

The second and third groups can be mostly analysed as the divine ethic compared with man's limited and imperfect code of ethics. Allāh's ethical nature indicates the fact that He acts upon man in an ethical manner⁸⁸, and expects man to respond in an ethical way. Man's response to his creation, in an ethical manner, according to The Holy Qur'ān, defines the terms of his religion. All of the attributes attached to the second group can be classified under the heading of ethico-religious concepts. The notion that man should respond to Allāh in imitation of Allāh's conduct toward mankind and that man should focus his efforts towards the commands and prohibitions of Allāh, is at the same time both ethics and religion.

The third group refers to the fundamental moral attitude of man toward his fellow beings in his environment. The Holy Qur'ān makes the judgement in regard to man's free will and ethical approach to others by first confirming man's right to judge another within a human situation. It also states that man has a natural right to get involved in a just act and to punish anyone who commits an unjust

⁸⁸ Izutsu, op. cit., Chapter IX.

act. The higher ethical quality entrusted to man's judgement is the virtue indicating that the one who forgives is more just than the one who takes revenge, and is therefore, closer to Allāh.⁸⁹

The social life of man is governed by many modes of morality which are derived from various sources. The social ethics that developed in Islamic communities grew out of the pre-Qur'ānic period into a system of basic assumptions formulating the jurisprudence of Islam. Within the framework of this thesis, the first group of ethics lies outside our scope of analysis due to the unique nature of Allāh and the limitations of any attempt to determine the nature of His reality. The second layer of moral conduct also lies outside the range of examining the pure religious message since it loses its originality and undergoes an extreme fluctuation in various communities. But the third group indicates the result of the intellectual accomplishments of man concerning his life style based on his convictions and fundamental beliefs. In most cases, divinity in man's ethic, concerning man, is determined by the applicability of the ethics. However, it would be an injustice to the ethical concepts of Islam to isolate any of the three groups totally from the others. They all are closely related to each other. This comes from the fact that Islam refers to Allāh as all knowing and to creation as the reflection of Him. Consequently, according to the teaching of The Holy Qur'ān, there could be no concept which can survive independent from the concept of Allāh. Every accentuated concept in human ethics based on religion is described as a faint reflection and imperfect imitation of its divine point of reference.

⁸⁹The Holy Qur'ān (Sura XLII, Ayat 40).

There are two key assumptions underlying the well-developed ethical code of Islam. One is absolute trust in Allāh and complete submission to His divine will. The other is a pious fear of Him. Fear, especially in the ancient world, was a common cause of human consideration and respect about the source of life. Even though man possesses an essential freedom in his existence, his physical needs and emotional dependencies are a powerful force to influence his behavior and moral conduct. Fear is one of the forces that can be used as a guiding reminder to man at the time of participating in a wrong act. If this free being elevates his understanding of the Divine Justice, and comprehends that he has a choice but his wrong-doing will not remain unanswered, he can grow a pious fear which finds its source in the fatherly love of Allāh. That is one of the reasons that Islam has the most powerful respect for the individual who loses his life without fear of any finite source, but with a pious fear of divine retribution rejoins Allāh with an effort to reflect the justice of his creator. In this manner, a pious man who evaluates his entire action before doing it, has fear from his Lord alone and not from any other power made by his Lord. Anything which indicates a tendency against the Divine Will is feared and avoided. This fear is not supposed to be a limitation on man's freedom. Man is entitled to the final decision. But his awareness of the result of wrong-doing affects his conduct.

O believers be upright before God as witness with intention. Let not your ill-will towards a people tempt you into the sin of not acting equitably. Act equitably, that is nearer to piety. Fear God, for God is aware of what you do.⁹⁰

⁹⁰The Holy Qur'ān (Sura V, Ayat 11).

As a result, the pious fear of the Divine source is replaced by love for the confirmed actions, which leads man to a higher state of being, with the quality of an appropriate ethical will. In other words, continuous state of awareness leading to pious action, initially for the sake of pious fear of Allāh causes a habit formation which results in creating love for approved deeds.

Good and Evil

The Holy Qur'ān refers to the pre-Islamic 'nonbelievers' as the group who did not possess any abstract notion of good and bad. This gives the impression that the nature of good and bad in Islam finds its origin in the teachings of The Holy Qur'ān. The fiqh (science of religion) scholars in Muslim culture developed Ahkām⁹¹, the five categories of action. These moral demands are reflections of the teaching of The Holy Qur'ān. Actions of man shall be composed of:

- a. Wājib (obligatory): These duties are sanctioned by the mighty Allāh as the absolutely necessary actions. Negligence in regard to these duties are punishable in the court of divine justice.
- b. Mustahab (recommended): These duties are strongly recommended but man can ignore them without any serious consequences. These actions are also sanctioned by the divine will, but their attainment brings reward and this neglect does not produce grounds for punishment.

⁹¹ Ahkām, in Islam refers to the laws that one get acquainted with and constantly compare and contrast his deeds to the suggested guidelines.

- c. Mujās (indifferent): These responsibilities bear no concern from the religious sources. One can engage in them and the outcome is the final consequence. It provides no reward or punishment to confirm or deny them.
- d. Makrūh (disapproved): These actions are not totally to the benefit of man's spiritual unity. It is suggested that they be avoided, but, in the case of involvement one would not expose himself to a punishable deed.
- e. Harām (prohibited): These engagements have severe consequences and it is to the best interest of man to stay quite clear from them.⁹²

The Islamic line of reasoning takes the position of absolute reliance on the nature of divinity in responding to the problems of good and bad. Material articles are basically good, as they are a creation of Allāh, but their use makes them appear good or bad so that man is the determiner of value. Good and bad concerning man's action has its point of reference in divinity. The key to the direction for action in Islam are the five Aḥkām described previously. The Holy Qur'ān, by referring to them often, has outlined the good works as the work of piety that have been exhibited first by the goodness of Allāh.

The concept of 'evil' in Islam, even though commonly used, is not simple to comprehend. All man's sinful actions are not, according to the Islamic line of reasoning, categorized as evil acts. Intention is the key word in the ultimate evaluation of man's deeds and as to the goodness or evil of an act. If one submits to an act of piety without his heart being in it and his intentional reluctance gives in and allows such a deed, the act loses all its merit. This

⁹² Ta'limāt-i Dīnī, (teaching of religion) School text on Islam published by the Ministry of Growth and Education, Tehran, Iran, 1973, pp. 22-23.

is on the ground that if circumstances permitted, this individual would have acted differently. G. F. Hourani in his book Islamic Rationalism defines evil in the light of Islamic rationalism thus:

The sum of what we put together on the definition of evil is that it is that for which if it occurs in any way on the part of one who knows it will occur from him in that way and who lets it happen (intentional commitment of sin), he deserves blame, unless there is a restricting reason.⁹³

There is this question that, if Allāh is perfect and superior to all, He then must have created a perfect world. If He possesses an unlimited power and knowledge, He should utilize them to get rid of evil. Islam refers to evil as an earthly desire for pleasure. Pleasure, in the normal sense of the word, is not condemned in Islam. Pleasures are condemned that lead man to commit acts against the ethical and spiritual guidelines. Islam mostly considers an evil act to be conscious participation in an activity which in the religion's purity is disapproved. People who are involved unconsciously in evil conduct, still are liable for their wrong doing, but, when they realize their evil and sincerely repent, they are forgiven in the divine court of justice. According to Islamic insight into the matter of evil, man's free will should be trained against such corrupting force. Evil was not directly created by Allāh; it was the disobedience of the angel 'Shayṭān' who, entrusted with free will, refused to submit to man who was made of nothing. According to the Muslim rationale, Allāh who is all powerful could eliminate, destroy and/or stop the evil of Shayṭān.

⁹³G. F. Hourani, Islamic Rationalism - The Ethics of Abdūl Jabbar, Clarendon Press, Oxford, Great Britain, 1971, p. 50.

But rather than make a world of no choice between good and evil, Allāh consciously permits the existence of evil and the responsibility of repelling such a corrupt phenomenon is left to man's limited power. This is the reason for entrusting man with the gift of free will. A governor who has no power to make judgements on his own cannot claim to be a true governor. With reference to the discussion in the preceding pages, we find man to be a free entity who depends on his superior for divine guidance. He is the representative of Allāh on earth, who strives to conduct himself and manage the affairs of this world in accordance with the Divine Will. If there were no evil (supposedly eliminated by the power of Allāh), then man could not show his worth and superiority over other creatures--man could not be a moral agent at all. Man's limited intelligenece, sincere search of knowledge, possession of spirit from a divine origin which causes his natural inclination toward Allāh, and his free will against the temptations of evil forces are the outstanding features of his superiority on earth. So, in this context, evil on earth serves a useful purpose and exists on the grace of Allāh to serve mankind.

Laws

We should, briefly, pay attention to the fact that Islam through The Holy Qur'ān did not forget the earthly living conditions of man and his problems. Rather, recognizing this aspect of life, Islam tries to guide man in his effort of survival and his human concerns. There are numerous 'Laws' in Islam intended to clarify what is lawful conduct. These guidelines can be found in regard to food, health, parents, friends, business activities and other features of life. K. Cragg in his book The House of Islam refers to the law

aspects of Islam and explains its nature in the following passage:

There is indeed, no more complete ethical theism than Islam. Its genius, we often find it said, is law rather than theology. The point is well made. But, it would be truer to say its strength lies in theology as law. It understands the world of man as set under God, constituted by creation, guided by revelation and summoned to submission. Awareness of God is, therefore, primarily awareness of obligation and accountability. Just as the law from Sinai set Jewry under the chains of the Divine Lordship within that they understood as sacred history, so the Divine Law in Islam makes all life and activity the realm of God's authority and man's obedience. The knowledge Islam enjoys in the revelation has to do directly with the demands of God and only indirectly with His nature. Law, we may say, is religion and religion is Law.⁹⁴

Islam recognizes the significance of law and the destructive anarchical and chaotic atmosphere of lawlessness. In this context, Islam, as a religion which is concerned with the whole activity of man's life, offers guidance supported by religious concepts as the law of man's society. Some of these laws are explained to be for the good of man and to have no spiritual connection. Such laws include, for example, forbidding the use of pork for eating, or condemning the drinking of alcoholic beverages. However, Islam, as a law-abiding faith of man within the realm of divine direction, is by no means a passive discipline. It recognizes the dignity of man, who has been entrusted with freedom of choice to rule the earth under the divine guidance of Allāh.⁹⁵ According to the Islamic view, this earth with all its components belongs to Allāh and only Allāh. But man, entrusted

⁹⁴Cragg, op. cit., p. 45.

⁹⁵The Holy Qur'ān (Sura II, Ayat 30 and Sura XXXIII, Ayat 72).

with qualities of freedom of choice, intelligence and ethical conduct, being loyal to his creator, is the ruler of this speck of the universal creation and directly responsible to Allāh for this world. As an appointee, man is expected to follow the divine will and respect the laws of the book revealed to him for the guidance of his actions. There are numerous laws in Islam, concerning the welfare of man in his community; laws clearing such matters as marriage, divorce, divine alms, etc. But, since it is not the intention of this paper to present Islam in its detailed entirety, we will confine our efforts to the related and more significant issues which present the fundamental features of Islamic commitments.

Five Pillars of Islam

Continuing the discussion of law in Islam, it is appropriate to consider the well-known five pillars of Islam. These are five demands made to the adherent of the Islamic faith. These five demands include the sacred laws that must be performed with the pure intention of unity with the Divine Will of Allāh. The five pillars are as follows:

a. Namāz (the ritual prayer): This is the formal prayer, and a spiritual communication with Allāh. This formal worship is to be followed by every able Muslim, five times a day, at fixed hours. The content of prayers consist of reciting the first sura from The Holy Qur'ān and other verses with some prescribed bowings, genuflexion and prostration. These short prayers are supposed to be conducted in a complete state of meditation, during which one's attention should not be taken by any earthly matter. The merit of following such a system is in the fact that the repetition of spiritual unity with Allāh, reciting faith in His leadership and asking for His Divine

support, strengthen man's religious beliefs and cause continuous submission. The Holy Qur'an prescribes that "Remember God often".⁹⁶

These prayers may be done anywhere, and under any quiet conditions. The spiritual unification, in a repeated manner, reassuring and refreshing his promise can involve every phase of man's daily living. He, in fact, will be in such a state to live a religious life.⁹⁷

b. Dhakāt⁹⁸ (almsgiving): This is a voluntary system of financial aid to support religious deeds. The amount is recommended to be one fifth of a man's earnings. The money is used to provide proper care for the poor and sick and support other general religious activities.⁹⁹

c. Rūzah (fasting): This is total abstinence from food, drink, and sexual acts from sunrise to sunset, during the month of Ramādān (an Arabic month). However, during night eating and drinking is permitted. There are many governing rules for engagement in the sacred act of fasting. Aside from practicing the life of piety the general intention is sharing what you don't eat with the poor. Scholars have ascribed many health benefits to this special diet for a short time in a year. The prophet Muhammad himself has attached health values to this act in promoting health consciousness about the danger of overeating.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ The Holy Qur'an (Surā XXXIII, Ayat 41).

⁹⁷ Muhammad Mughniy, Namāz Shāhrāh-i Inṣāniyat, Mearozi Publishing Center, Tehran, Iran, 1971, pp. 14-35.

⁹⁸ Dhakāt is traced back to a Jewish origin, practiced with slight variation in Jewish communities. Ringgren, op. cit., p. 187.

⁹⁹ Ta'limāt-i Dīny, op. cit., p. 23.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 46-50.

"Fast for the health of your body".¹⁰¹

d. Hajj (pilgrimage): This is an obligatory journey for any believer, once during his lifetime if the person is financially and physically able. Muslims are persuaded to visit the Ka'bah, in Mecca, more often if they are able.

e. *Amr Ma'rūf, Nahy Munkir* (creed, persuading good and dissuading evil): This is an active participation in the promotion of Divine Will and prohibition of the opposite. In Islam *Ma'rūf* (approved) and *Munkir* (disapproved) deeds are in reference to the fundamental beliefs of Islamic theology. This faith demands from its adherents, who (as a man and not a chosen few) are representatives of Allah on earth, the persuasion and initiation of the approved deeds and dissuasion from disapproved practices. Islam does not exempt its adherents from promotion of their faith. A vivid example of this obligatory participation is presented in *Jihād*.¹⁰² This is a sacred obligation of every Muslim to participate in any form (physical or verbal) in the holy war against the non-believers who are in an ignorant state. This holy war, if formal, is usually announced by Muslim leaders, and joining the general direction of actions is mandatory.

The basic principles of Islamic theology and the concept of the five pillars of Islam have undergone a great variation and manipulation in different branches of Islam. But, the different teachings reflect fundamentally similar notions with various colorings.

¹⁰¹ *Nahj al-Faṣāḥah*, op. cit., p. 393, verse 1854.

¹⁰² The term *Jihād* which has been of many interpretations in Islam has a general implication of religious efforts to promote the world of Allah. Joviddan, Muhammad Ali, *Nabard-i Mughaddas Ya Jihād-i Islāmī*, Haqiqat Press, Tehran, Iran, p. 63.

Believers

Islam cautiously describes the qualities of a true believer as opposed to non-believers. In fact, pages of The Holy Qur'an are covered by a repeated reference to believers and non-believers. At this point of our discussion, we have already covered most of the essential qualities which meet the spiritual and ethical standards of Islam. Some of these qualities were previously described in an attempt to examine various aspects of Islamic faith. Our task in this part consists of a re-examination of the preceding information for the establishment of the characteristic features of the true believer, which are often serious concerns of The Holy Qur'an.

The believer's most accentuated attribute is the strength of his Iman (belief). This Iman can be strengthened or weakened by the intellectual activities of man. The strengthening point comes after the concepts presented in Islamic theology are spiritually grasped and have dispelled the state of doubtfulness. Successful religious experiences, although they substantially contribute to the development of a true believer, are not quite enough. With reference to other characteristics of a true believer, the following passage of The Holy Qur'an is enlightening:

Only those are believers who whenever God is mentioned their heart quivers and when His signs are recited to them, they increase them in belief, and upon their Lord they place reliance, those who attain service steadfastly, and expend of what we have bestowed upon them. These are the believers in the true sense.¹⁰³

¹⁰³The Holy Qur'an (Sura VIII, Ayats 2-4).

In this context we find that genuine piety is required from believers who get so deeply attached to Allāh and his Divine Will that the mere mentioning of His name arouses an intense sensation of love and obedience. This pious state does not preclude the believer's effort to gather earthly goods and wealth. The wealth is the result of the grace of Allāh, and it should readily be spent in Allāh's way if necessary.

In a separate passage of The Holy Qur'ān there are more clarifications regarding the concept of believer.

Those who go back repentant, those who praise, those who worship, those who fast, those who bow down, those who fall prostrate, those who enjoy good and forbid the evil, those who keep within God's bounds. Give thou good tidings to the believers.¹⁰⁴

The whole relation of believer and Allāh is based on the utmost respect and humility, with the believer submitting totally to Allāh's Divine Reality. This absolute obedience and submission must be man's choice. But this choice must be in absolute confirmation with Allāh's choice to be religiously approved. The following passage sheds more light on this aspect:

It becomes not a believer, whether man or woman when God and His apostle have decided any affair, to have his or her own choice in the affair. Whoever disobeys God and His apostle, he has indeed gone astray into error manifest.¹⁰⁵

There are two qualities which constitute the ultimate evaluative measure of any human action. The two terms that describe these qualities are radically opposed in meaning and are the foundation

¹⁰⁴ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura IX, Ayat 113).

¹⁰⁵ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura XXXIII, Ayat 36).

of the whole ethical differences between believers and non-believers. The two terms are Īman, which has been explained before, and Kufr. Kufr refers to the impiously inclined deeds, which are mostly in pursuit of worldly pleasures--actions which have an adverse effect on a man's salvation at the day of resurrection.¹⁰⁶ This system was in the best order during the life of the prophet Muḥammad, when all the adversities were solved by his divine insight with respect to acts that are Kufr and those that are Īman. After the life of the prophet Muḥammad, these two qualities were not entirely obscured; rather, Islam developed a remedial solution to the problem. People who had devoted their educational effort to studying religion--religious scholars, preachers, and also well-known men of piety--became the authority for evaluating the nature of any contemporary action.

People who are true believers and follow the path of piety in their worldly associations as well as in their direct responsibilities to Allāh are awarded entrance to the heaven. Those who do the opposite deserve the fires of hell.

Verily, God will admit those who believe and do good works into gardens underneath which rivers flow, while Kāfars (non-believers who commit Kufr) take their enjoyment in the present world, eating as the cattle eat, but the fire (hell) shall be their final dwelling place.¹⁰⁷

From this passage two significant contrasting points can be drawn:

¹⁰⁶ Islam claims that on the last day of judgement, all the dead will come to life, in body and soul. They will be judged for their action in this world and they will be sent according to their sentence to heaven or hell.

¹⁰⁷ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura XLVII, Ayat 13).

a. Their action in this world: The believer is only concerned with doing pious work, confirmed by Islamic faith, while the non-believer passes his days in the pursuit of pleasures.

b. What they obtain on The Day of Judgement: The believer will acquire the reward of paradise, while the non-believer will obtain the residence of hell.

Another significantly important quality of the believer, which has been emphasized throughout the teachings of Islam, is the active role of every believer in taking the side of Allāh and preaching His righteousness. But non-believers spend their efforts on earthly matters.

We can summarize the personal qualities of believers in the light of the passages of The Holy Qur'ān as follows: Almsgiving in helping others and avoiding attachment to worldly matters; keeping away from Kufr deeds which are strongly forbidden by Allāh; slaying any living being which has been forbidden by Allāh; constant devotional practices; avoiding perjury; profound sensitivity to the sacredness of the revealed statements; thankfulness; actively promoting the world of Allāh; and the pious fear of Allāh with regard to The Last Day of Judgement.

Islamic Identification With Schools of Philosophy

The deliberate confinement of this thesis to the original teachings of Islam forces us to ignore the later development of philosophy in the Islamic world. Indeed, it would not be justified to entitle this section "Islamic Philosophy". It would be more suitable to refer to it as "Philosophical trends of the early teachings of Islam".

Considering the natural geographical handicap of the pre-Islamic Arab communities, the type of activities in which they engage out of environmental necessity, and their general isolation from the life-style of other cultures; there should be no surprise that Arab intellectual life was insignificant. Their life-style was not conducive to the formation of an actual philosophical consciousness.

Fakhry, in his A History of Islamic Philosophy, reports that:

The chief cultural monuments of the Arabs, before the rise of Islam, were poetry and literary traditions that were transmitted orally and embody a record of the social, political, religious and moral aspects of Arab life.¹⁰⁸

This observation summarizes the preference of the pre-Islamic Arab for the poetic as distinct from the philosophic form of intellectual awareness. The poets were considered the men of knowledge and wisdom. The chanting of their magical words held valuable guidance for their tribes and often beyond their particular clans. However, these contributions were primitive, regional and fragmentary.

Islam not only provided a coherent view of the world for Arabs, it also broke the traditional myth that intellectual activities should be restricted to only gifted and privileged individuals. Islam was formulated as an appeal to the common man. Islamic doctrines persuaded all to purify themselves and increase their knowledge in order to be better Muslims.¹⁰⁹ This was considered the prime purpose of Islamic aspiration for which the Prophet was deputized by Allāh.

¹⁰⁸ Majid Fakhry, A History of Islamic Philosophy, Columbia University Press, New York City, 1970, p. 1.

¹⁰⁹ Muzaḥfar-i-dīn Nadriṣṣ, Muslim Thought and Its Source, Muḥammad Ashraf Kashmiri, Bazar Lahore, Pakistan, 1965, pp. 1-9.

The following words in The Holy Qur'ān, verify this fact:

...that we would show them (mankind) his signs, purify them, and teach them the script and Hikmat (wisdom).¹¹⁰

The prophet Muḥammad himself was actively exhorting all men to the pursuit of knowledge and spiritual advancement as a path to piety.

The high Islamic regard for the position of scholar and the obtaining of knowledge, no matter how far one must travel or how hard he must try, is especially evident in the teachings of the prophet Muḥammad.

In Nadri's selections of passages from the prophet Muḥammad's reflections, the following quotation is a good indicator of such a regard:

The ink of the scholar is more holy than the blood of the martyr. He who leaves his home in search of knowledge walks in the path of God. He who travels in search of knowledge, to him God shows the way to paradise.¹¹¹

In summary, there are two significant philosophic points of emphasis in Islam which effectively set the stage for its intellectual development. These points of emphasis are (1) the intellectual thrust, whereby knowledge is regarded as an effective vehicle for spiritual elevation and the key to success in life, and (2) the popular thrust implying the potential equality of man in all phases of life, especially his ability to achieve a highly spiritual experience through religion. These ideas could not last long without a substantially reliable source of reference within the grasp of man. Revelation of The Holy Qur'ān fulfilled this need and supported the teaching efforts of the prophet Muḥammad in his divine mission. In fact, without serious dispute the teachings of The Holy Qur'ān¹¹²

¹¹⁰The Holy Qur'an (Sura LXII, Ayat 2).

¹¹¹Nadrius, op. cit., p. 3.

¹¹²The Holy Qur'ān was revealed to the prophet Muḥammad by God between 610 and 632 from an eternal code (the preserved tablet). According to Islam doctrine, The Holy Qur'ān embodies the full range of principles and precepts by which the believer should order his life.

were principally responsible for the transition from pre-Islamic conditions to an intellectually higher period of Islamic culture. The transition altered the conduct of Arab life, most particularly with respect to its concern for intellectual development, its regard for all men, and its unifying influence on all Arabs.

From the philosophical perspective, the first Muslim communities lacked an elaborate Islamic metaphysical system. Considering the sudden transcendence of radically narrow limitations of tribal existence, one can comprehend the strong attachment of the early Muslim to his new belief which offered a broader concept of existence. This time-consuming faith which demanded total commitment and strict adherence to doctrine, at first created an attitude of distrust toward any other ideas and any deviation from its well defined path.

Professor Nasr, in his book Three Muslim Sages, mentions the view that the absence of a clear-cut philosophy in the early Muslim community can be analysed as the result of four distinct observations which prevented such a development:

- a. Explosive, rapid expansion of Muslim society.
- b. The true comprehension of the concepts presented by revelation.
- c. The urgent need of finding the most efficient administrative codes of government to keep up with the rapid expansion of the Muslim society.
- d. The immediate need of the application of Qur'anic Laws to the new circumstances.¹¹³

These points are soundly descriptive of the limits imposed on an extensive philosophical progress with its demand of a profound attention.

¹¹³H. Nasr, Three Muslim Sages, (Cambridge, 1969), pp. 1-3, Vol. I, Tehran, Iran, 1331 A.H., (1952), p. 31.

One also must not ignore the primitive conditions of the pre-Islamic communities, which were the most powerful, inhibitive forces of all.¹¹⁴ In fact, the influence of Nestorian Christian scholars, who utilized philosophical arguments against the teachings of Islam, and the non-Arab Muslim communities who stood apart from the conservative and strictly discouraging approach of those in the Umayyad dynasty who accepted nothing outside the realm of The Holy Qur'ān provided an advance to the staid intellectual life of pre-Islamic culture.

The prophet Muhammad himself engaged in arguments to defend his revelations and to attract the unbelievers' devotion. This type of rational encounter is noticeable in many verses of The Holy Qur'ān.

O ye people of the Book¹¹⁵, our Apostle has come to you to explain to you much of what ye had hidden of the Book, and to pardon much. There has come to you from God a light, and a perspicuous Book; God guides thereby who follow his pleasure to the way of peace, and brings them into a right way.

They misbelieve who say, 'Verily, God is the Messiah, the son of Mary;' say, 'Who has any hold on God if he wishes to destroy the Messiah the son of Mary, and his mother, and those who are on earth altogether?'

...but the Jews and the Christians say, 'We are the sons of God and his beloved.' Say, 'Why then does He punish you for your sins? Nay, ye are mortals of those who He has created. He pardons whom He pleases, and punishes whom He

¹¹⁴ Z. Safa, Tarīkh-i Ulūm-i Aqlī Dar Tamadun-i Islāmī, tr. (The History of Sciences in the Civilization of Islam), Vol. I, Tehran, Iran.

¹¹⁵ People of Book in The Holy Qur'ān refers to the Jews and Christians who have received a written revelation of the previous prophets from God for their guidance.

pleases, for God's is the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and what is between the two, and unto Him, the journey is.¹¹⁶

Therefore, pre-Islamic intellectual activities mostly consisted of the oral transmission of poetry and literary traditions. Islamic faith is definitely credited with the provenance of a substantial body of knowledge, stimulating intellectual growth in different directions from purely religious considerations. M. Fakhry verifies this point by stating:

Islam not only provided the Arabs with a coherent and bold world-view which sought to transcend the narrow confines of their tribal existence, but thrust them almost forcibly upon the cultural stage of the ancient world and set before them its dazzling scientific and cultural treasury.¹¹⁷

Islam, thus, provided reason with a prominent place in life. There are several distinct philosophical movements which find their primitive roots originally in the intellectual engagements of the early Islamic era, shortly after the doctrines of the new faith had found strength in the hearts of most Arabs. In their new faith, the Arabs inherited an excellent, prestigious, and highly abstract concept which required profound comprehension and ingenious defense against contradictory arguments. This defense strongly marked the life of the prophet Muhammad and is reflected in many revelations of The Holy Qur'ān. The tone of The Holy Qur'ān is backed by explanation of historical events and offers an appeal to reason.

And a part of them asked leave of the prophet to depart, saying, verily our houses are defenseless

¹¹⁶ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura V, Ayat 18).

¹¹⁷ Fakhry, op. cit., pp. 1-2.

and exposed to the enemy.¹¹⁸ ...But they were not defenseless and their intention was no other than to fly. If the city had been entered upon, then by the enemy from the parts adjacent and they had been asked to desert the true believers and to fight against them...flight shall not profit you. If you fly from death and slaughter and if it would, yet shall you not enjoy this world but a little.

To be rational, one needs to be well-informed. Islam emphasizes the pursuit of knowledge more than any other involvement. The prophet Muhammad stated "everything has a foundation, our religious foundation is knowledge".¹¹⁹ Knowledge to be used in attaining a state of rational being is of two kinds in the teachings of The Holy Qur'an. The first can be characterized as knowledge which, when presented to us, we have no choice but to accept. An example of this type of knowledge is the knowledge we obtain by perception through our senses. This is the clearest kind of knowledge. Another variation of this kind can be our own experiences supported by the work of our senses. This also leads to comparison of objects or events. This knowledge-acquiring process needs the involvement of reasoning in the experiences compiled by our senses to produce comparison, discrimination, and confirmation. Another variation of this is the general knowledge of truth obtained as self-evident truth. Some examples of this kind can be characterized as "the wrong doing is always evil" or "a will for evil is evil". Sense-perceptual data is not needed for its proof. The teachings of Islam, even though backed by historical analysis, rely heavily on the intuitive type of reasoning

¹¹⁸ The Holy Qur'an (Sura XXXIII, Ayat 14).

¹¹⁹ Nahj al-Fasāhah, op. cit., p. 179, verse 890.

This knowledge is attainable by the intellect of any rational individual. This is not quite dependent on perception, although it usually is preceded by it. This refers to general knowledge dealing with man's state of ethical conduct. Such knowledge is usually learned from nature and one's relationship to sense data, intuition, and reason.

The second type of knowledge is innate. This can be characterized by inquiry for the reality and the truth of things. It is a rational process of discussion and proof. This is the basic knowledge. The Holy Qur'an offers substantial proof of the Reality of Allāh by pointing to the perfect nature of the universe, its law and order and its divine origin.¹²⁰

The Islamic encouragement that one increase one's knowledge in becoming a rational being was received well. But in actual application, this did not always result in the extension of pure intellectual activities. The use of reason in early Islam found its immediate application in the service of religion. This was due to such factors as traditional loyalty, personal conviction, upbringing, ambition, or social pressure.

The most influential thrust leading to the rational approach in Islam was manifested when conflicting theological views began to delineate dogma. Part of the conflict was introduced by Greek philosophy through faulty and biased translations which were brought to the illiterate world of the Arab by non-Muslim visitors or residents. Omar Farrukh, concerning the nature of Greek philosophy presented

¹²⁰ The Holy Qur'an, (Sura XXIX, Ayat 61).

to early Muslim communities, states:

The Greek philosophy came to Arabs deformed and altered through the ignorance or intent of the translators...¹²¹

Nestorian Christians and Jews were the other most influential factors contributing to the development of this rational awareness. With the rapid-expansion of Islam beyond the bounds of Arabia, and with the annexation of various scholars of different traditions and cultures who had accepted the faith, new concepts began to assert themselves in Islam. Converts interpreted the book of The Holy Qur'ān according to their inclinations and cultural convictions. Consequently, disagreements and discords arose among the believers of the same faith. Study of The Holy Qur'ān and other related topics as well as concern for the application of religious doctrines to the existing problems were stimulated.

According to S. M. Nadvi¹²², the problems of the Muslim faith in the early period consisted of four disputed concepts: Freedom of Will, the Attributes of Allāh, the Demarcation Between Beliefs and Actions, and the Dispute Between Reason and Revelation. All these disputed questions remain as complex to the human intellect today as they did during the early Islam.

An extreme determinism insisted that the freedom of the human will is a tool at the hand of Allāh. Allāh, in other words, is the absolute authority for everything. On the other hand, the more liberal-minded Muslims believed in the absolute liberty of actions.

¹²¹Farrukh, op. cit., p. 82.

¹²²S. M. Nadvi, Muslim Thought and Its Sources, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, Pakistan, (fifth edition), 1965, pp. 10-12.

They claimed that the Majestic Allāh entrusted man with certain powers and capacities, and with the freedom to utilize them as he wishes. Both sides possessed a definite point of reference in the teachings of Islam. The following revelations definitely support the absolute authority of Allāh over all events and creatures.

He is powerful over everything¹²³

He does whatever He intends¹²⁴

God has all things at His command¹²⁵

God creates what He will¹²⁶

And He pardons whom He will and punishes whom He will, inasmuch as God is a supreme sovereign¹²⁷

On the other hand, there are other indications in The Holy Qur'ān of man's freedom.

Whosoever acts virtuously does so for himself, and whosoever acts viciously does so for himself.¹²⁸

...and whosoever gets to himself a sin, gets solely on his responsibilities.¹²⁹

...and when they commit a deed of shame, they say: 'we have found that our fathers did so, and God obliged us to do it'; say thou: Surely, God requirerh not shameful doings.¹³⁰

¹²³ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura XLVIII, Ayat 12).

¹²⁴ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura XXII, Ayat 14).

¹²⁵ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura XVI, Ayat 77).

¹²⁶ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura XXIV, Ayat 45).

¹²⁷ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura II, Ayat 49).

¹²⁸ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura XLI, Ayat 54).

¹²⁹ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura IV, Ayat 3).

¹³⁰ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura VII, Ayat 29).

So whoever follows the right path does so for his own good, and whoever goes astray bears on himself the responsibility.¹³¹

Verily, changes not what concerns any people until they change what depend on themselves.¹³²

Actually, both sides seemed drowned in their own extreme positions. The harmony in the passages of The Holy Qur'ān point to the absolute authority of Allāh, while at the same time giving the privilege of freedom to man for striving to mold his own destiny. Ali ibn Mūs al-Rizā, the eighth Imām (eighth successor after the prophet Muhammad, in Shī'ite sect.) in his denunciation of determinism states:

God has pointed out to you the two paths, one of which leads you to Him and the other takes you far away from His perfection; you are at liberty to take the one or the other, pain or joy, reward or punishment, depends upon your own conduct. But man has not the capacity of turning evil into good or sin into virtue.¹³³

The truce between these opposing views of 'free will' and 'fatalism' (extreme determinism) was effected by the emergence of attributism. This school of thought adhered to the principle of man's compulsive action and ascribed various attributes and qualities to Allāh as distinct from His essence¹³⁴, attributes such as glory, greatness, knowledge, etc. These attributes gradually developed into the "Mushābihāt" (The Resemblance) which consisted of parallels drawn between the qualities of Allāh and human qualities, of which we have knowledge. In this context, an idealistic view of Allāh being as the

¹³¹ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura X, Ayat 108).

¹³² The Holy Qur'ān (Sura XIII, Ayat 27).

¹³³ Ameer Ali, op. cit., p. 412.

¹³⁴ Nadvi, op. cit., p. 21.

origin of perfect attributes and of man striving to reach these ideals prevailed. An opposing view, developed through logical examination and faith in the original teaching, stated that divine unity referred to the oneness of Allāh, pure and simple, with no trace of dualism to His unity. Allāh has no attributes apart from his Divine Essence. He is supreme, not because He has attributes, but because attributes derive from His Essence. He has a Divine Love for man and endows him with many privileges, such as freedom of choice, intelligence, power, etc.

These early Islamic issues became the major concerns and acted as the spring-board for, many intellectual developments. Among these developments was the growth of early rationalism in Islam. The two distinct principles, Divine Unity and Divine Justice which were entertained by the rationalists, represented the views of Khalīf Ali and the most liberal of his descendants in "Mu'tazilites". The rationalism of "Mu'tazilites" was probably present at the time of the prophet Muḥammad, stemming from his own teaching.¹³⁵

"Mu'tazilites" claimed that knowledge is and should be attained through reason. It took the position that cognition of good and evil is within the province of reason. Nothing can be classified right or wrong unless it is so declared by reason. The Mu'tazilites maintained that the knowledge of Allāh is also within the province of reason and everything is susceptible to change except Him.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ Ameer Ali, op. cit., p. 416.

¹³⁶ Ibid., pp. 417-422.

An example of this kind of teaching can be noticed in the passage stated by the Khalīf 'Alī trying to enlighten the minds of his followers concerning the conception of deity by the line of reasoning in the following passage:

God would not be similar to any object that human mind can conceive. There could be no attribute ascribed to Him which resembled the qualities of man with his confined knowledge and narrow perception of materials and concepts. The perfection of knowledge is the affirmation of His verity; and the perfection of verity is to knowledge His unity in all attributes to the Deity. He, who refers attributes to be God, and he who so believes an attribute to be God regards God as two or part of one...He who asks where God is, assimilates Him with some object. God is The Creator, not because He Himself is created; God is existent, not because He was non-existent. He is with every object, not from resemblance or nearness; He is outside everything not from separation; He is the Primary Cause not in the meaning of motion or action. He is The Seer, but no light can see Him. He is not himself located in time, place, or measure.¹³⁷

The ideals of "Mu'tazilites" were not uniformly held among its adherents. But according to Shahrastānī, there was a general agreement that eternity is the distinct attribute of the Divine Reality. In other words, Allāh is Eternal and this is a unique attribute of His Essence. There are no eternal attributes and qualities distinct from His being. His Essence is not apprehended through any knowledge, power, or life as are His Eternal attributes. For knowledge, power and life are a part of His Essence and so cannot be known by means of other ideas. The adherents of Mu'tazilites strongly forbade the description of God by reference to the properties of any substance. They also

¹³⁷ Mahj al-Balāghah (the words of Kalīf 'Alī), tr. Javād Fāzil, Ilmī Publishing Institution, Tehran, 1972, pp. 2-4.

emphasized that in the teachings of The Holy Qur'ān, expressions of the attributes of God are used figuratively and not literally. They also held the view that man is the creator of his own good or evil acts. He will be punished for his evil acts and will be rewarded for his good acts in The Divine Court of Justice.

This rationalistic approach to questions of the birth of Islam spread rapidly among the thinkers of the period. Gradually the doctrines of "Mu'tazilites" expanded and were referred to as rationalistic. Rationalism also started a path toward the weakening of religious grips on every phase of life, which led to the later development of Islamic Scholasticism.

Islamic Scholasticism developed in two different phases. The first and primitive phase was the sincere effort to use the knowledge of logic in defense of theology in the early developmental stages of Islam. The second phase was a reactionary movement¹³⁸ against the later rationalists who contended that the doctrines of Mu'tazilite were too abstract, and who began pulling away from the controls of religion. A sophisticated scholasticism, or a movement of intellects to justify by reason the dogmas of the faith, started a zealous persecution, cruel immolation and intolerant discrimination against the ideas threatening the established issues of Islam. But scholasticism and a highly developed mysticism in Islam were movements which lie outside the era under investigation in this paper. Our brief discussion has been limited to the primitive thoughts reflecting the philosophical tendencies of the original teaching of Islam.

¹³⁸Nadvi, op. cit., p. 52.

In summary, Islam encouraged the use of knowledge in a rational manner. Early believers spent their intellectual efforts clarifying the nature of Allāh, His Divinity, His Unity, His Attributes, His Justice, and His compassion for man. Scholasticism had its application in the early Islamic era, defending the doctrines of Islam. Since most of the scholars' effort was concerned with religious matters, rationalism which also had an early appearance in Islamic intellectual development extended to the point of questioning the doctrines of Islamic faith. Aside from the understanding of Allāh, predestination, freedom of will, good and evil were the basic issues at hand.

Chapter III

THE CONCEPT OF EDUCATION IN ISLAM

A comparison of the educational activities of pre-Islam and the Islamic age proper, makes it obvious that the Islamic emphasis on the pursuit of knowledge and the body of knowledge in Islamic theology that developed in the Islamic period proper, encouraged a dramatic progress in this important aspect of the Arab civilization. In order to conceptualize a true image of Islamic education during the early years of its development, we shall examine the attitude of Islam toward learning, the content of its educational tendencies, and its educational activities and institutions.

Due to the limitations of original sources, the following educational concepts are implications drawn from various related and primitive sources through the research of much later scholars. In this literature the findings of others as a secondary source of information is used.

A. Attitude of Islam Towards Education and Scholars

The revelation of The Holy Qur'an is the starting point of education in Arabian culture. Ahmad's research in Muslim education up to the 5th century (Muslim Era) points to the manifestation of Islam as "the first educational movement in Arabia"¹ and to the

¹ Munir-ud-Din Ahmad, Muslim Education and the Scholar's Social Status Up to the 5th Century, Muslim Era (11th Century Christian Era), in the light of Tārikh Baghdad. Verlag, DerIslam, Aurich, 1968, p. 28.

prophet Muhammad as the first educational promotor and authority. The prophet states that "any one of my days which is passed with no significant learning, that day is not blessed".² From these two sources the entire system of learning in the Muslim world grew, as a flower grows from a seed, and again, like seeds, through the centuries these two sources remained the starting point of Muslim education.

It is considered significant that the first verse revealed to the prophet Muhammad by the angel Gabriel, contained a reference to knowledge:

Read: In the name of the Lord who createth man from a clot.

Read: any thy Lord is the most..., who teacheth man that which he knew not.³

Many other verses in The Holy Qur'ān also stress the importance of knowledge. The Holy Qur'ān also furthered the cause of education in other, more concrete ways. For instance, it decreed that transactions involving credit be made by a written document; and it was recommended to the faithful followers that written wills be used in order to avoid questions on the matter of inheritance. According to Ahmad, a list compiled by al-Baldhāmi of those who could read and write in Mecca at the time of Hijrah contained only seventeen names. It would seem that the requirement for credit transactions alone would have provided a hardship for the Meccan merchants, and an incentive to acquire the skill of writing.

² Nahj al-Fasāhah, op. cit., p. 23, verse 126.

³ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura XCVI, Ayats 1-6).

O ye who believe, when you take loan, one from another, for a term, reduce the transaction to writing, and let a scribe record it in your presence faithfully.⁴

The Holy Qur'ān also takes the position that it is the duty of every believer to seek after knowledge to the best of his abilities. The teachings of Islam are essentially gnostic, meaning that all forms of knowledge, even the most secular, become imbued with a sacred quality, resulting from the fact that all knowledge is regarded as sacred. The pursuit of knowledge, then, is a religious duty imposed on the faithful.⁵ The prophet Muhammad states:

Everything has a foundation, our religion's foundation is knowledge.⁶

Everything has a way of reaching it, the way to reach heaven is through knowledge.⁷

No one is from us, except scholars or learners.⁸

Two hungers will never be satisfied: hunger for knowledge and hunger for wealth.⁹

Goodness in both worlds is accompanied by knowledge and wisdom. Evil in both worlds is accompanied by ignorance and lack of knowledge.¹⁰

⁴The Holy Qur'ān (Sura II, Ayat 283).

⁵Sayyid Husayn Nasr, Science and Civilization in Islam, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1968, p. 64.

⁶Nahj al-Fasāhah, op. cit., p. 179, verse 890.

⁷Ibid., p. 478, verse 2259.

⁸Ibid., p. 510, verse 2418.

⁹Ibid., p. 568, verse 2748.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 312, verse 1482.

Although he is generally held to have been illiterate himself¹¹, the prophet Muhammad held a high opinion of education and recommended to his adherents the pursuit of knowledge. Some of the prophet's statements in regard to the importance of knowledge are as follows:

Seek knowledge from cradle to grave.¹²

Seek knowledge even though it may be in China.¹³

Hungriest is the one who searches for knowledge.¹⁴

The most knowledgeable is the one who adds others' knowledge to his own.¹⁵

In your acquisition of knowledge hurry, because it is more valuable than gold or silver.¹⁶

Such hearty encouragement from their spiritual leader, coupled with their religious duty as set forth by Allāh (one of whose names is appropriately al-'Alīm—all knowing), had the result of awakening in the people of Arabia an interest in learning. They became convinced that education was not an attainment for a minority to master, but rather an acquisition within the grasp of all.

Regarding the Islamic age cultural ideal, Von Grunehausen states that:

¹¹There seem to be various opinions about the prophet's knowledge. Although it is generally conceded that he was unlettered at the time of the first revelation, some hold the opinion that he later learned to read and write; that the term illiterate should read unschooled (Ahmad quotes sources that hold this belief). Ahmad, op. cit., p. 29.

¹²Nahj al-Faṣāḥah, op. cit., p. 64, verse 327.

¹³Ibid., p. 63, verse 324.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 13, verse 68.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 69, verse 360.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 365, verse 1723.

Every civilization and every age favor a limited number of human types for whom they will provide the fullest means of self-realization, while denying it to an even larger number for whose peculiar gifts the prevailing pattern affords no socially meaningful use...(Islam accepts the artisan and respects the merchant, and the sword ranks lower than the pen). Religious knowledge is more desirable than wealth. Outside the circle of the canon lawyers, gnosis comes to be rated above rational knowledge...the scholar, the jurist-theologian, and the literateur,¹⁷ are encouraged by this civilization.

In Islam knowledge brought prestige. Without knowledge the believers were handicapped in their striving for eternity. The purpose of man in serving Allāh was the hope of eternal felicity. Allāh, through his revelation, has stated the way he wishes to be served. The knowledge of His wishes, as recorded in The Holy Qur'ān, rests in the minds of the learned, and it is the duty of every believer to seek from the learned the knowledge necessary to insure his salvation. For this seeking after salvation is the core of the Islamic search. To serve Allāh was man's prime concern and the quest for knowledge had to be reconciled with it. Since learning was a religious duty and religion was the center of existence, it followed that the ones who possessed the proper sacred knowledge were accorded high standing in the community. Scholars were called "heirs of the prophet" and were given titles such as "Sayyid al-nās" (leader of people) and "Sayyid al-Muslimīn" (leader of Muslims).¹⁸ Their influence in the community was great; in matters of religion they

¹⁷Von Grunehaus, op. cit., p. 25.

¹⁸Almad, op. cit., p. 194.

could overrule even a Khalīf, though for the most part they took no interest in government. Their voices were heard on matters of importance and their influence was felt. Ahmad indicates that the Khalīf Hārūn al-Rashīd (ruled 789-809) is supposed to have backed down from proclaiming his opinion in a religious disputation due to his fear of a noted scholar, who he knew would oppose his view.¹⁹

Part of the respect given to the scholars was due to their unique position in society. They formed a connecting link between the masses and the aristocracy. Most of them were from the middle class and many from the families of merchants. They maintained their rapport with the populace by living among them and by following occupations which necessitated contact with the general public.

There were hardly any professional teachers in early Muslim society. Teaching was regarded as a privilege and the duty of any Muslim who had the knowledge. The prophet Muḥammad emphasizes this point by stating:

In learning, be helpful to one another and do not hide anything from your brothers.²⁰

A generous fool is dearer to God than a miserly scholar.²¹

An honest scholar is a god on earth.²²

Most scholars, therefore, had to support themselves in other ways and not by their teaching, which was a sacred duty. Lessons were

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 196-7.

²⁰Nahj al-Fasāhah, op. cit., p. 236, verse 1178.

²¹Ibid., p. 375, verse 1762.

²²Ibid., p. 423, verse 1997.

free for the most part. The few who charged did so out of necessity.²³ A few accepted governmental positions or financial aid from the government, but this was not usual. The popular opinion, especially in the first five centuries, was against this. The savants did not wish to be subject to any governmental pressure, nor let the government dictate what was to be taught. Also, the general attitude was to degrade knowledge that was sold.

So in Islam, the purest pursuit of knowledge is totally independent of materialistic influences. We also observe that the persuasion of learning receives great consideration from Islam. Man's strong inclination toward the accumulation of knowledge is a worthy desire. The prophet Muhammad states:

Man without knowledge creates more destruction than improvement.²⁴

B. The Curriculum

The types of knowledge to be attained and the action following such learning is an important consideration in Islam. Knowledge must be beneficial to others and be useful in reality and action. Knowledge without any use is not considered worthwhile. The prophet Muhammad states that, "I fear the knowledge that is not beneficial to others",²⁵ and "the knowledge which is not used, is like treasure which is not spent".²⁶ The essential concern of know--

²³Amir-ud-Din Ahmad, op. cit., p. 254.

²⁴Nahj al-Fasāhah, op. cit., p. 622, verse 3058.

²⁵Ibid., p. 101, verse 516.

²⁶Ibid., p. 174, verse 860.

ledge in Islam is to increase the scope of intelligence in order to promote a higher level of understanding of The Divine Reality. Even though Islam did not specifically limit the human intellectual endeavor, early Muslim education was parochial in the sense that it was limited in range and scope. The system expanded outward from its Qur'ānic center, but was always tied to it, as a planet is tied to its sun.

As we have previously discussed, the start of Muslim education was the appearance of the sacred book of The Holy Qur'ān and the prophet Muḥammad. This was the historical beginning and starting point from which all future scholars embarked. The first educator was the Prophet, sitting with a group of converts, first in Mecca and later in Medina, expounding to them on the abstractions in The Holy Qur'ān. His listeners recorded his words or confined them to memory. With this approach he established the style for the future schools: a teacher encircled by students engrossed in his words.

In the original teachings of the Prophet, the main subject was religion, and the teachings of The Holy Qur'ān that were concerned with living a religious life. M. Fakhry, describing the nature of Muslim educational concerns centered on the efforts of the prophet Muḥammad observes that:

The pivot round which the whole Muslim life turns is, of course, the Qur'ān. Revealed to Muḥammad by God between 610 and 632 from an eternal code, according to Muslim doctrines, the Qur'ān embodies the full range of principles and percepts by which the believer should order his life. The Qur'ān is supplemented, however, by a mass of utterances attributed to Muḥammad and constituting together with circumstantial reports of the actions and decisions of the Prophet the general body of Muḥammadan traditions,

properly designated in Muslim usage as the Prophetic Way.²⁷

Overwhelmed by the sacredness of the Truth of the Divine Word (Kalām) and the concerns of the Prophet, the first generation of scholars devoted their energy to securing the sacred canon, examining its abstract nature, commenting upon it, and drawing legal or ethical implications from it. In these activities, we find the development of the science of reading ('ilm al-Qirā't), exegesis (Tafsīr) and jurisprudence (al-Fiqh). From these special sources stemmed substantial disciplines referred to as linguistic or traditional science. In this light, we find the development of grammar, rhetoric, and related subjects, during the first two centuries of the Muslim Era. The prime concern of educators continued to pivot around the justification, adequate interpretation, and complete comprehension of The Holy Qur'ān and the traditions. Even poetry became the subject of study in order to interpret familiar and unfamiliar terms or idioms in confirmation with The Holy Qur'ān or tradition.

C. Institutional Provisions for Education

Since the first duty of a Muslim was to learn the teachings of his religion, the rituals and the revelations, this was where the Islamic education began. The first generation of Muslims had had the advantage of learning from the most authoritative teacher of all, the prophet Muḥammad; the succeeding generations studied the same lessons in primary schools (al-Maktab) which closely resembled the original model. These lessons were generally given in the mosque,

²⁷Majid Fakhry, op. cit., p. 2.

but also sometimes took place in private homes. Instruction was started with The Holy Qur'ān, which was learned by heart, in part or sometimes totally. Then the student progressed to Arabic literature and grammar. Ahmad quotes al-Shāfi'ī who gave this piece of advice to the tutor of the children of the Khalīf Hārūn al-Rashīd:

Teach them the book of God (Qur'ān)...then saturate them with the chaste poetry and the best of the Hadith, do not substitute one subject for another unless they know the former perfectly...²⁸

This quotation also gives us an idea of the approach toward learning which emphasized strictness and a structured curriculum. These studies, along with writing, probably completed the curriculum of the primary school.

In these schools both boys and girls could study together, although as time went by and the culture solidified, fewer girls were to be found in attendance and those who received any education at all usually obtained it at home from educated women hired as private tutors.

The ages at which the primary education commenced and ended are hard to pinpoint. Ahmad records one case of a student who left primary school at age ten and of others who were in advanced studies at age eleven.²⁹ The usual age was probably between ages 10 to 12.³⁰ The range of ages in primary schools might well have been variable depending on interest, readiness and ability.

²⁸ Mamluk-ud-Din Ahmad, op. cit., p. 47.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 43.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 143.

Payment was exacted for lessons given in the primary school, although the pay scale seems to have been minimal. Abū Hanīfah, (dated 767) when inquiring into the future benefits that would accrue from the study of various branches of science was told that a primary teacher earned two to three dinar monthly (dinar was a chief gold coin of the Muslim world). This money was collected from the students attending lessons. Although small, it did keep some from learning, because of lack of ability to pay.

The status of the primary teacher was not very high. The elementary teachers were sometimes despised. They were even mocked because of their ignorance...³¹, on the other hand, private tutors who taught the children of the wealthier members of society enjoyed a higher position and were paid more. This difference in status is explained by Ahmad who says of them, "They were often well-known scholars, who usually held classes for the general public in addition to their regular jobs as private tutors".³²

The salary paid to this group varied from one to another. Ibn al-Siqāt (858-9) in his first job as a tutor was paid 10 dirham (dirham = 1/10 of dinar) but a later appointment brought in 500 dirham monthly (50 dinar) and was later increased to 1000 dirham.³³

The purpose of primary education was to acquaint young persons with the principles of their religion, and give them a knowledge of reading and writing. The maktab (a primary school) served as the center of religious and literary education in the general community,

³¹ Ibid., p. 48.

³² Ibid., p. 46.

³³ Ibid., p. 48.

and as a proving ground to sort out those capable of further study. When finished with the maktab a student could go into advanced studies. Ahmad even records cases where students still in primary school were already attending higher classes.

Until the 10th century the main institutions of learning for those who had completed the maktab were the majlis (circle or gathering; the literal meaning is sitting) where the student (tālib al-'ilm) could hear discussions of various scientific and philosophical ideas. Majlis can be translated into the English language by the word assembly and perhaps this is the best choice. They were not schools as they are known in Western culture; not permanent buildings with a group of instructors. The Majlis came in various types. One man might take students on a regular basis in a location of his choosing--but this lasted usually only until the death of the instructor--although sometimes other teachers might succeed the original founder. Such schools could be of various degrees of permanency. Some met only for a short period of time to pursue a definite purpose while others continued indefinitely. There were also those which met regularly at stated intervals. These were very similar to what we would call a class, a group of students and a teacher who met on a regular basis. The subjects commonly making up the curriculum of Muslim schools were basically confined to what was called the "Islamic Sciences". "Foreign Sciences" (sciences which existed in the beginning, before the birth of Islam, which the Arabs acquired from other cultures) were not taught in the traditional Islamic schools, since the orthodox Sunni Muslims equated them with heresy. It was in the ninth century that an interest in "foreign science" started to develop, and after

this time some of the more practical of the ancient sciences (al-'ulūm al-Qadīmah) were integrated into the traditional Muslim curriculum. Those that won a degree of acceptance included: medicine (al-tib), geometry (handasah), music (mūsīqah), logic (mantiq) and philosophy (falsafah).

The Shī'ites showed a little more freedom in their curriculum.

Nasr states that:

The Shī'ite schools...showed an affinity toward the awail sciences (foreign science), placing a much greater emphasis in their program on these subjects....some of the Shī'ite Imāns legitimized the study of the awail sciences and even encouraged it."³⁴

Ahmad, in the search presented in his dissertation, includes the subjects of the traditional Islamic schools.³⁵ These subjects are as follows:

Philology ('ilm al-Lughat): The study of the Arabic language, necessitated by a desire to gain the clearest understanding of The Holy Qur'ān.

Grammar ('ilm al-nahw): A necessary study for the understanding of the verses of The Holy Qur'ān also the need to teach the Arabic language to foreigners.

Literature ('ilm al-Adab): There were two types of teachings in this category:

- a. Poetry--regarded as a necessary subject of study for all students.
- b. Prose--a lesser study, developed after the conquest and used most often in governmental circles.

Qur'ānic Exegesis ('ilm al-Qur'ān, wa al-Tafsīr): This was one of the most important branches of Islamic science, the study of which was indis-

³⁴Sayyid Husein Nasr, op. cit., p. 72.

³⁵Amir-ud-Din Ahmad, op. cit., pp. 32-9.

pensible for every jurist and theologist.

Reading ('ilm al-Qirā'at): This contained the science concerned with vocalization of the words of The Holy Qur'ān and its recitations.

Traditions ('ilm al-Hadīth): Tradition included the study of short statements and acts of the prophet Muḥammad which exhibited excellent wisdom.

Jurisprudence ('ilm al-Fiqh): This was the most popular study. The popularity was probably due to the fact that knowledge of Islamic laws often led to a profitable governmental appointment as a judge (Qāḍī).

Science of Distributive Shares ('ilm al-Farā'id): This was a branch of jurisprudence, but treated as a separate science.

Dogmatic Theology ('ilm al-Kalām): Study of the Divine Words, frowned upon by the orthodox until the 10th century and the springboard for scholasticism in Islam.

The students met with their teachers in various places; the mosques were the most natural meeting places and the main educational centers, but others were also known. Separate school buildings built for that purpose of education were common, but many teachers achieved the effect of a private, independent institution by holding classes in their homes or shops. These places also played a central part in the educational system. Aside from these most common meeting places others were sometimes used. Large public gatherings for the purposes of education could be held in public squares. In two cases, Aḥmad records teachers meeting their students in gardens.³⁶ Another popular place for discussion, if not properly an educational center was the public bath. The private homes of the wealthy and powerful who made

³⁶Ibid., p. 113.

a hobby of patronizing learning also sometimes hosted discussions by groups of scholars. In a civilization without a formal educational system any place could and did serve the purpose of education.

The purpose of these assemblies was indicated by a complimentary noun attached to the word. For instance, *Majlis al-Hadīth* a class for the traditions of the Prophet; *Majlis al-Nahw*, a class in grammar. The following are the types of *Majlis* that might be found in a large educational center of the Muslim world.

Majlis al-Hadīth: Classes held to report the traditions and acts of the Prophet. They might have been occasional or permanent. Permanent ones were held by those who specialized in this field, occasional sessions were held by those who might only have a few traditions to report and who would hold classes until they had told them all. The difference between the classes for *Hadīth* and classes for other students lies in the fact that the *Hadīth* were reported to everyone, young or old, who might want to be present. The teacher was not required to simplify them or explain his subject matter or to follow a plan of teaching from simple to complex as the instructors of other subjects had to do to teach their field. *Hadīth* were collected only by mature persons who traveled to each reporter; stayed with him only so long as it took him to collect all he knew, and then went on. Students of *Hadīth* were thus unlike students in other areas who went to a place to study a subject and stayed until they had mastered it.

Majlis al-Tadrīs: This meant classes for teaching a certain subject, such as *Majlis al-Fiqh* or *Majlis al-Nahw*. They were more like contemporary courses. A student started with the simpler aspects of a subject and advanced according to plan until he mastered it. He would know before starting approximately how long he must study and his progress could be registered in set stages.

Majlis al-Munāzirah: This was a meeting for disputation, not a regular educational institution. It was more an assembly for competition among scholars. Some were open to students, who could

learn a lot if they frequented them. They might have been of various types.

- A. One kind was a gathering of scholars at the invitation and under the patronage of the Khalīf or the powerful and wealthy members of society to discuss questions of general interest such as theology, poetry or Hadīth.
- B. Another type was convened by the scholars themselves and unlike the first type which was not open to students, did have an educational function. This second type resembled discussion groups which met regularly.
- C. The third type was a spontaneous discussion which might arise anytime two or more scholars of varying opinions came together. They might be accidental or subject to some degree of pre-planning.
- D. The last type was a contest among scholars for the purpose of deciding which was the most learned. The meetings were pre-arranged and widely publicized. A judge was present, who ruled on the winner. This was a way for a scholar to achieve renown; and students often challenged famous scholars, hoping to win a dispute and thereby become known as a scholar in their own right.

These disputations which often took place between scholars representing different schools of thought had a great impact on the Muslim educational system because they demanded clear-cut arguments and logic of the participants who defended their views and the open confrontations between scholars of opposing viewpoints helped to clarify the principles and differentiate among the various schools of thought.

Aside from the Majlis which were probably the equivalent of our graduate schools, there were more ordinary ways of obtaining knowledge, which were patronized by the mass of students. Throughout the Muslim world the form was sufficiently similar to be able to draw a general description. Ahmad says the organization is "characterized

as the system of Ḥalghah". The word Ḥalghah means a circle or ring, a descriptive term referring to the seating arrangement, which was a semi-circle with the teacher at the center, perhaps on a dias or near a pillar which he could lean against. The students arranged themselves in a half-circle in front of him. These classes were open to all who wished to attend, native born or foreigners. There were no age requirements, women as well as men could participate, and the lessons were usually free. One limitation prevented non-Muslims from attending classes in The Holy Qur'ān or Hadīth, although they were welcome to study the non-religious subjects.

All classes were conducted in Arabic, the scholarly language which made it possible for a student to travel a long distance and be assured of being able to understand his lessons. The use of this language and its universal knowledge among scholars helped to promote and maintain the cultural unity of the Islamic civilization.

Classes met at fixed times, but the times were set at the teacher's pleasure. The first session would usually start after morning prayer, although some might start before. The second round probably started in mid-morning and lasted until noon. The third round started either just before or just after the mid-afternoon prayer and might last until sunset. These three were the usual class times, but occasionally classes were held in the evening, although these were for the most part due to exceptional circumstances, such as an out-of-town scholar who was visiting for a short period and who might consent to teach.

The instructor also decided how often to hold class. Some met classes everyday. At the other extreme, some might hold classes

only once a year. The usual practice was for a class to assemble once a week, or perhaps twice, the second day being used for dictation.³⁷ It must be remembered that this was before printing and the students usually wrote their own texts as they heard their lessons. An interesting feature of large dictation classes was the use of an assistant called a *mustamīl* whose function was to repeat the lesson word for word in a loud voice as it was dictated so that it could be clearly heard in all areas where the instructor's voice might not carry.

Aḥmad states that there were basically three different methods of teaching: *al-samā'*, *al-īmā'*, and *al-ijāzah*.³⁸ *Al-Samā'* meant hearing. This method involved the teacher himself reciting from his book or from memory to the class. Two variations of this method were: a) the student would recite from the teacher's book, or a copy of it, or from memory and, b) the students listened to a lesson presented by one of them to the teacher. *Al-īmā'* refers to a method involving the transmission of knowledge...by way of dictation, by the instructor, usually from memory. *Al-ijāzah* was a method which involved giving permission to a student to report a specific portion of a book on the authority of the teacher.

The relations between teacher and student in the Muslim way of education was more personal than usually found today since the seeker after knowledge chose, instead of an institution, a person as his source of education. The atmosphere in these schools was re-

³⁷Ibid., p. 90.

³⁸Ibid., p. 93.

laxed. A student learned at his own rate and had no set time in which he must finish. When he felt he was competent in his area of study, and had mastered his subject to his teacher's satisfaction, he was given a paper stating his competence. This was his diploma, and he could then take students of his own.

Another facet of Islamic education was Rihlah (a journey to acquire knowledge) which students undertook to further their education. Almost every serious student undertook a journey to the chief centers of learning in the Muslim world in spite of the hardships involved. Ordinarily a student would leave his hometown when he had exhausted the sources of education available to him there. For protection he would join a group--either of other students, a pilgrim group or a merchant caravan. Once launched on his journey a student might cover thousands of miles and stay away from home for years in order to learn. These trips were especially necessary for students of Hadīth, because in the first three centuries after the prophet Muhammad a canonical collection of traditions did not exist and the students, in order to compile their collections, were forced to journey from teacher to teacher, collecting what each had to offer and compiling their own collections. In the case of Hadīth it was considered beneficial to hear from as many teachers as possible, and there are records showing that some travelled thousands of miles to hear just one book or a few passages.

Students of other subjects found it necessary to journey to the centers of learning where the specialists in their fields resided. Once there, they might have to stay with their teachers for many years.

Not only students, but teachers also journeyed. There was no time limit and no set curriculum in the Islamic system and the line between teacher and student was fluid. A teacher taught what he knew, but he also learned from others, remaining a student until his death. One thing that served as an initiation of many scholastic journeys was the religious requirement of the pilgrimage. Both students and teachers took advantage of this journey to learn from others in their caravan and also to visit as many scholars as possible in the cities they passed through.

As the Muslim civilization grew and became more firmly established, educational institutions were founded that more closely resembled those we are familiar with today. The first of these was the house of wisdom built by the Khalīf al-Ma'mūn in Baghdad in 815. This college also had a library and an observatory and was supported by funds from the state treasury. It soon became a gathering place for scholars. Hārūn al-Rashīd (ruled 786-809) and his son endowed schools, organized libraries, founded a university and set up an observatory. 'Azād al-Dulāh, king of Iran (977-82) founded a magnificent library at Shiraz, which contained 360 rooms. The library at Tripoli, burned by Crusaders in the First Crusade is reported to have contained three million volumes. The Fatimid Khalīf al-Hakīm constructed the Dar al-'ilm (house of knowledge) in Cairo in 1005. This had an observatory, a medical college, and a library reported to contain over one million books.

The knowledge gained by those who "graduated" from the Muslim educational system could be applied in various ways. Some students, usually the more casual ones, might have learned only as

a religious duty or simply for the sake of knowledge. A few of the serious ones studied subjects from which they could not hope to derive any future profit, but the majority of them had a professional goal in mind when they undertook their education. The profession of teacher was not a goal of the students, since generally it was felt that a teacher should not take money for his knowledge. The student of Ḥadīth, also, could not hope to profit because of this education, but knowledge of Ḥadīth did command great respect from the community. The subjects to be studied if the student wished to use them to gain a position in life were: Grammar ('ilm al-Nahw), Philology ('ilm al-Lughāt), Jurisprudence ('ilm al-Fiqh) whose students had the best chance of employment, and Recitation ('ilm al-Qirā'at) whose students recited The Holy Qur'ān and could have an occupation in the mosques.

A quote by Abū Hanīfa (Muslim jurist d. 767) gives true assessment of the chances for gain:

When I made up my mind to learn, I started investigating different branches of knowledge and asking what I could gain by learning them. I was told to learn al-Qur'ān. I said: 'Well, if I learn al-Qur'ān and know it by heart, what will I get out of it?' They said, 'You will sit in a mosque. The children and young people will recite it to you, till one of them knows it better than you do, or he becomes your equal—in that case your position will be in danger.' I said, 'If I collect Ḥadīth and write it so extensively that no one in the world knows it better than myself.' They said, 'When you will grow old and weak, you will start teaching it. Then there is the possibility of your committing mistakes. In that case they will accuse you of cheating, which will be a disgrace to yourself and to your family'. I said: 'I am not interested in it'. Then I thought I would learn al-Nahw. I asked about my lot if I shall learn al-Nahw wa al-Arabiyya. They said, 'You will become al-Mu'illim (a teacher al-Mu'lim of boys) and

earn two or three dinars a month'. I said, 'This has no future either. If I learn poetry and there remain no better specialists therein, what shall be my lot?' They said, 'If you write poetry in praise of this he will give you money, or present you with riding animals or robes of honour. But if he does not do that you may write poetry in his Hadju, (i.e. satiric poems written to ridicule people).' In that case you will be slandering honest women. I said, 'I have no need of it'. Then I asked: 'What shall be my lot if I study al-Kalām, (i.e. speculative theology)'. They said, 'No one, who studies this subject is immune to heresy. In that case you will be accused of free thinking and perhaps be put to death or if you are spared you will be of ill repute'. I said, 'What will happen if I learn al-Fiqh?' They said: 'You will be consulted and you may issue Fatwā for people, and you might be sought for the post of Kadi even if you are young. I said, 'None of the branches of knowledge is more profitable than this.³⁹

The high esteem accorded scholars in the Muslim world meant that there was a constant supply of young people who were willing to invest their time and effort in an attempt to gain recognition from knowledge, either scholarly or financially. These educated few formed a buffer class between the uneducated mass at the bottom of the class structure and the aristocracy at the top. Their constant movement in search of knowledge fostered an exchange of ideas throughout the Arab civilization. The discussions and exchanges that went on between the scholars caused a ferment, that kept the society intellectually alive and progressive.

³⁹Ibid., pp. 172-3.

Chapter IV

THE ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF THE SELF: BODY AND SOUL

In this chapter it is intended to examine the concept of self in Islam in order to draw implications for physical education and sport. Islamic teaching stresses that the body and soul are inseparable in action, therefore they should not be treated in isolation. Therefore, to establish a clear conception of the physical existence of man introduced by Islamic belief, we shall examine the concept of body and soul with its attributes.

As in the previous chapter, the scope of our research is limited to the teachings of Islam in its original phase. In particular, the concepts presented in this chapter are rooted in the message of The Holy Qur'ān, the teaching of the prophet Muḥammad, and the views of the prominent leaders of Islam who were immediate successors of the prophet Muḥammad. The Holy Qur'ān presents the fundamental pillars of Islamic belief. The prophet Muḥammad engaged in a serious attempt to promote the concepts of Islam. In doing so, he was actively involved in constant teaching and learning situations. His teachings bear the stamp of his belief and his statements either relied on the Divine Revelations or enlightened new situations backed by his interpretation of the Divine Revelations. Although, according to Islamic faith, none of the followers and contemporary figures of the prophet Muḥammad possessed any direct and divine connection, like him a handful of them spent much of their time at the lectures of the Prophet, followed closely in his struggle, and began to participate

in the actual teaching and preaching of Islam in the same manner. Among these were the first four perfect Khalīfs, especially the fourth Khalīf, 'Alī, the son-in-law of the Prophet. There are volumes of books written in regard to 'Alī's wisdom, bravery, virtuousness and piety. The prophet Muhammad had high regards for 'Alī's bravery, wisdom, and the strength of his belief. He is quoted as saying, "whoever accepts me as his lord accepts 'Alī as his lord also".¹ So, in our discussion, we shall include the contributions of the first four Khalīfs as reliable sources which agree closely with their originator.

Islam perceives the nature of man as the image of Allāh. Man, referred to by Islam as a free agent, is bound to the divine controls and guidance, blessed with certain properties such as the power of intellect, affected by the pain and pleasures of nature, capable of spiritual experience, and subject to limitations in every aspect of his existence. According to Islam, during his existence man is made up of a living body and soul, which are inseparable until the time of death. Even though Islam confirms the existence of the soul after death, man's full existence in this world comes to an end by the separation of body and soul. With this proclamation Islam does not advocate the independence of body or soul in life; rather it refers to man as the existential unity of both. Consequently, body and soul are not synonymous; rather they act in union. In the following discussions we attempt to examine the contribution of each to this union.

¹Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabātabā'ī, Shi'ate dar Islam, Ghadr Publisher, Tehran, Iran, 1972, p. 11.

Even though both body and soul are important components in life, Islam claims that the soul is responsible for the actions of the body. Therefore, the soul appears to be held superior to the body. Even so, in existence, it is not only the soul that needs the supervision of Allāh; the body also requires divine attention. The need for such attention is apparent in the prophet Muhammad's prayer in public, "God, I pray to you to keep my body healthy..."²

Islam shows its concern for man's total being by emphasizing his action in the ethical dimension and integrating this action with his physical component. Man prefers human concerns to spirituality. The Holy Qur'ān contains the statement that "...you desire the ephemeral goods of the present world, while God desires for you the Hereafter."³ This passage does not offer man what is to be recognized as a valuable article in physical form; rather Islam offers other rewards such as the dwelling of peace.⁴ But, in other parts of The Holy Qur'ān, Allāh recognizes the physical realm of man and his desire for physical pleasure, and offers him a kind of satisfaction related to his natural tendencies which are significantly grounded in the physical. The description of heaven and hell in the text of The Holy Qur'ān refers to numerous pains and joys of physical essence. These descriptions imply the recognition of the physical existence with approval of proper physical pleasure.

The Islamic view supports the allied effort of body and soul

² Mahj al-Faṣṣḥah, op. cit., p. 104, verse 527.

³ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura VII, Ayat 67).

⁴ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura X, Ayat 26).

in existence. Khalīf 'Alī states that "There are people who possess a body, capable of moving their tongue and hearing with their ears and seeing things, and they proudly think they are human!"⁵ In this respect he does not value man merely as the possessor of a body with its physical properties. In another statement, emphasizing the importance of the unified existence of body and soul and the necessity of their state of well being in facing responsibilities of life, he claims:

In life, body and soul may get bored with one another. Illuminate the soul with knowledge and wisdom, enshrine it with fine ethical attributes in order to get along with people and find a better life. Get your body used to physical action and away from laziness. Keeping your body active will keep your spirit high and joyful. You will feel happy and light, like a bird wishing to fly. Never wish to be kept from problems; the man of God steps into the battle of being and successfully attains his state of piety.⁶

This passage reveals a significant correlation between the well-being of the body and the state of the mind. It also presents the notion of total commitment of body and soul in the struggle to attain piety.

A. The Concept of Body in Islam

Islam emphasizes the well-being of both body and soul, and clearly claims the effect of one on the other. In previous discussions concerning man's existence we have noticed the whole conduct of being as the responsibility of soul. But, the body has not been ignored in the teaching of Islam. In fact, the prophet Muhammad was

⁵Nahj al-Balāghah, op. cit., p. 457.

⁶Ibid., pp. 181-2.

a leading advocate of the health and care of the body. In keeping harmony between the intellectual pursuit to illuminate the mind and the activities which improve the body, one of the strongest emphases of the Prophet was against the unhealthy condition of his followers' physical existence. He connects health concerns to the intellectual concerns of religion by stating that, "Allāh is beautiful and likes beauty, He is merciful and likes people who are merciful, and He is clean and likes cleanliness".⁷ With the intention of revealing the concern of religion for a healthier condition of the human body, the prophet Muḥammad implies Allāh's dissatisfaction with the existing condition. In this respect, he states that "Allāh is the enemy of dirt and untidiness"⁸, and he emphasizes this point by adding an extra touch of divinity to it: "Be as clean as you can be, Allāh founded Islam on cleanliness".⁹ Allāh's concern about the well-being of man's body is recognized by the tone of the prophet Muḥammad's teachings and religious concerns.

Anyone who has a healthy body, is secure, and is able to meet his daily responsibilities, owns the whole world.¹⁰

They put all the sins in one house and leave the key to drinking.¹¹

⁷ *Mahj al-Faṣāḥah*, op. cit., p. 139, verse 690.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 150, verse 741.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 237, verse 1182.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 579, verse 2808.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 276, verse 1306.

Allāh has condemned eating without hunger, sleeping without tiredness, and laughing at someone.¹²

Comb your hair and clip your nails; the devil finds residence between your nail and your flesh.¹³

The prophet Muḥammad directly connects the spiritual exercises of man with a consciousness for the care of the body. Some of the direct connections are seen in his teaching, such as "...your mouth is a passage of The Holy Qur'ān; keep it clean by brushing it".¹⁴ A stronger approach can be identified in the Islamic ritual of wudū'¹⁵ and ablution. Wudū' is a cleaning preparation of the body, demanded before every namāz, which is the most frequent and spiritually significant formal prayer in the daily life of a Muslim.

O' Believers; when ye rise up to prayers, wash your face and your hands up to your elbows, and wash your heads, and feet up to your ankles, and if you are polluted then purify yourself. But if ye are sick, or if you have touched women and cannot find water, then take fine surface sand (sand purified under the suns of Arabia) and wipe yourselves. God does not wish to make any hindrance for you, but He wishes to purify you and to fulfill his favor upon you.¹⁶

The strong emphasis on cleanliness implies that this is a necessary condition for establishing pure communication with Allāh. This condition consists of purification of body as well as soul. Teachings

¹² Ibid., p. 450, verse 2119.

¹³ Ibid., p. 306, verse 1456.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 120, verse 602.

¹⁵ Wudū' is a cleaning ritual which is cleaning of arms, hands, feet, face and head preceding each participation in namāz.

¹⁶ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura 5, Ayats 8-9).

of the prophet Muhammad urge precautionary concern for the health of the body as well as encouragement for treatment during sickness. Some of the Prophet's precautionary statements and encouragement for treatment concerning health awareness are reflected in the following statements:

Whatever, too much consumption of it makes you drunk; avoid any portion of it.¹⁷

Be aware that there is a piece of flesh in your body; if it is well, the whole body is well and if it is not well, the whole body is not well, and that is your heart.¹⁸

Travel keeps you healthy (activities involved in traveling).¹⁹

Fast for the health of your body.²⁰

Anyone who ate little remained healthy, anyone who ate too much became physically sick.²¹

Treat your health problems, Allāh has availed a cure for every sickness.²²

The prophet Muhammad made sure that care of body and cleanliness were understood, indicating the effective influence of body on soul by stating that, "...cleanliness is strength to your belief..."²³ Emphasizing the reward for following his health teachings for the

¹⁷ Nahj al-Fasāhah, op. cit., p. 195, verse 964.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 91, verse 475.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 365, verse 1725.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 393, verse 1854.

²¹ Ibid., p. 547, verse 2779.

²² Ibid., p. 228, verse 1136.

²³ Ibid., p. 226, verse 1131.

benefit of body he states that "the age of my followers is sixty and seventy years (indicating a long and healthy life)".²⁴

Islam does not specify the attributes of a sound body. The only attribute mentioned is a slim body. The Khalīf 'Alī has made some reference to a young-looking body.

Richness is a great asset in life, but the healthy body is much better. People who possess a young-looking body and an alert mind are happier and luckier than the rich man who is after a good time and pampers his body.²⁵

Usually Arabs were described as slim and firm. So, Khalīf 'Alī's reference to the young-looking body was probably made with the emphasis on its slimness and firmness. The prophet Muhammad, The Holy Qur'ān, and several known leaders of Islam have emphasized the ideal figure to be slim. In fact, the prophet Muhammad attaches a dietary value to fasting as a way to get rid of excess fat: "Everything has a tax; fasting is the tax of the body".²⁶ He also comments that, "Man won't find a worse dish to fill than his stomach: enough food to keep you healthy is sufficient".²⁷

The body in Islam finds more respect if its governing mind uses it properly. Since everything has been created for a reason, in the realm of creation the body fulfills a useful purpose. However, this usefulness of the body is not found in a separate state from the soul.

²⁴Ibid., p. 70, verse 367.

²⁵Nahj al-Balāghah, op. cit., p. 508.

²⁶Nahj al-Fasāhah, op. cit., p. 878, verse 2257.

²⁷Ibid., p. 558, verse 2697.

B. Attributes of Soul in Islam

Islam attaches little significance to a well-coordinated, strong and well-developed body in isolation from its unity with a sound soul. Physical excellence is just a necessary instrument for man's proper action. Man's actions are not initiated by the body. It is the soul, decorated by human virtues and vices that initiates action.

Islam put as much emphasis on the morality of man as any previously declared ideology. Man, according to Islam, is an ethical being. No matter how many intrinsic physical attributes or how much extrinsic material wealth is granted to a man, his primary value is dependent on the virtues he exhibits in his ongoing daily conduct. In other words, it is the moral state of his everyday life that signifies his physical existence.

The strong emphasis on piety in Islam is not an approach confined to the state of religiousness, though all such activities are in some measure participants in religiousness. Rather, it is a path to be followed in all phases of human involvements. The state of morality in Islam leading to piety is strongly advocated, and man is persuaded to take a firm stand under adverse conditions. It is taught that it is better to lose one's life in the struggle to confirm moral teachings of Islam than to acquiesce in hostile conditions. 'Alī, following the teachings of the prophet in most of his speeches, praised the worst ending in order to overcome the fear of starting. In confirming his position, 'Alī always claimed desire to be amongst the martyrs for righteousness and truth. He claimed that too many times the fear of death stops man from rising against tyranny and

oppression. In order to overcome such fear one must not mind the consequence.²⁸

The key position taken by Islam with regard to achieving moral rectitude is an attitude of less dependency on earthly materials. There is no similarity between this downgrading of man's tendency to physical greed and the position taken by Buddhism viewing the physical world as a hindrance to man's salvation. Islam views the materials as the creation of Allāh on earth for man's utilization. The prophet Muḥammad shows the worth of the material in man's life when he suggests:

Be concerned about four matters before hand:
youth before old age, health before sickness,
wealth before poverty and life before death.²⁹

Islam is in favor of the healthy effort of gathering material for comfort in life. But, there is a hairarchy of value preferences from spiritual too material. Islam distinctly states that one should not get to attached to material comforts, obtaining them at the cost of purity, and protecting them at any cost. The position of Islam on the potential influence of material goods on piety is a cautionary approach. The prophet Muḥammad states that, "The one who needs materials less, is less needy".³⁰

The strength of man's attitude to neglect material goods lies in his woul. There are many attributes of the soul discussed in Islamic faith. In order to examine each attribute distinctly, we ought to acquire a broad perspective of their nature. In regard to many virtues, Islam completely broke away from the old paganism;

²⁸ Nahj al-Balāghah, op. cit., p. 414.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 216, verse 1073.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 68, verse 354.

but it is also apparent that The Holy Qur'ān in some cases revealed a revised version of old Arab ethics, suitable to the state of monotheism. There seems to be a certain tone in the moral aspects of Islam that entertains the notion of restoration of some of the old Arab ideals and nomadic virtues which were degenerating preceding the rise of Islam. T. Izutsu, noticing this correlation, states that "...we encounter in the Qur'ān man, the moral ideals of the desert in the new garment of Islam".³¹

Be that as it may, Islam did not simply revive or restore the nomadic modes of morality as they were current among Bedouins. Islam presented its ethical code in a fresh and purified form relevant to spiritual elevation and in accordance with its ideals of divinity. The prophet Muhammad, 'Alī and other influential figures were the product of their primitive social culture. They were also involved in constant teaching, making judgements and commenting on issues aside from their pure religious pursuits. The actual ethical concepts of Islam are a combination of the teachings of The Holy Qur'ān and the influence of the original leaders of Islam who tried to harmonize their teaching with the content of The Holy Qur'ān. In the final analysis, even though we do not find all the affirmed moral codes in Islam to be a direct reflection of the Divine Revelations of The Holy Qur'ān, they possess sufficient support and authority to obtain a commanding respect.

Dichotomy of Attributes in Islamic Teaching

Ethical messages in Islam reflect a notion that there is a

³¹Toshihiko Izutsu, Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'ān, Montreal, McGill University Press, 1966, p. 75.

dichotomy of virtues and vices. And further, that since all virtues are learned, it is not implausible to suppose that corresponding vices can be learned also. So man comes into the world morally neutral, according to Islamic ideology. This concern for the dichotomy of attributes is important, since most ethical educations cover the approved side and unconsciously ignore the educational process of recognition and alertness for the disapproved side. We see the example of such an awareness in the statements of the prophet Muhammad as follows:

Rebellion afflicts bravery, self-glorification afflicts nobility, lies afflict word, forgetfulness afflicts knowledge, extravagance afflicts charity, and impetuosity afflicts religion.³²

Softness causes happiness and harshness brings lowness.³³

Telling the truth brings serenity and telling lies accompanies agitation.³⁴

The Holy Qur'ān also presents the Prophet's descriptions of the positive attributes of "believers" and the negative attributes of "non-believers". Khalīf 'Alī, explaining the nature of man, used this dichotomous approach. In the following description he defines a pious man to Ma'mūn, a close associate, as follows:

These people speak the truth, they are humble in their association, they listen to the words of wisdom and possess a clean mind. They don't have greed and don't carry excessive weight. They possess the healthiest blood and their heart is warm and sensitive, decorated with bravery, meekness, full of kindness and strong belief.

³² Nahj al-Faṣḥah, op. cit., p. 1, verse 1.

³³ Ibid., p. 335, verse 1698.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 394, verse 1863.

They are greedy in obtaining knowledge, their statements are usually supported by their actions. They are just and easy on their enemies and sincere and truthful to their friend. They worry about their responsibilities, but they are confident that they try their best. They rely on their own physical ability and do not force themselves on others. They confess their mistakes and apologize for them.³⁵

Khalīf 'Alī also spoke of the non-ethical tendencies in man in the following manner:

What a strange creature is man! There has not been another as astonishing as him. He possesses childhood, no matter how old he gets. That is to say, that he finds happiness and sorrow in insignificant matters. Sometimes he is too much and sometimes not enough. When hopeful, he increases his greed and when helpless he dies of sorrow. He gets so angry he loses his mind and becomes so happy that he gets carelessly confident and loses his common sense. He is weak and helpless in fear and he falls in a well like the blind when secured. He endures adversities very poorly and loses patience and in one second he forgets the whole world at the moments of pleasure. When poor, he gets desperate as if it is the end of this world because he can't eat enough, and when rich he eats to the point of sickness so that he can't move. A child who is helpless in its crib, weaker than a fly, and can't be nourished on anything but milk gradually develops an appetite that cannot be sated by swallowing the whole world. This helpless and milk-fed child can turn into a cruel and bloody savage animal.³⁶

General Notion of Virtuousness in Islam. Being religious and believing in the essential teachings of Islam is counted as an essential virtue of man. Other established and more specific practical ethical codes in Islam are within this broad virtue. Islam repeatedly persuades its adherents to be moral. The prophet Muhammad states that, "goodness

³⁵ Nahj al-Balāghah, op. cit., p. 147-151.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 135-6.

is plenty but doing good is rare"³⁷, "a good Muslim is a virtuous being"³⁸, "the one with better virtues than you also possesses stronger belief"³⁹, and speaking to Arabs, he affirms that "...you are no better than blacks or reds, unless you are a better man (morally speaking)".⁴⁰ The prophet Muhammad describes some signs of being ethical by saying:

You are a pious man if you find joy in your good deeds and sorrow in your wrong doings.⁴¹

He is actually promoting a deep self-consciousness for morality. The Prophet also advises constant self-evaluation and self-correction by saying, "Whenever you commit a bad deed, improve the situation by initiating a good deed".⁴² Khalīf 'Alī asked his followers to be concerned with two activities of their tongue, "...persuade people in actions which benefit many and dissuade them from actions that harm any".⁴³ In other words, morality is with intention, speech and actions involving body and soul.

Pure Intention. In being a rational being, following the modes of Islamic morality, and trying to achieve piety, a Muslim is persuaded to start his process of purification with his intention. It is his

³⁷ Nahj al-Fasāhah, op. cit., p. 323, verse 1548.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 132, verse 662.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 74, verse 420.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 112, verse 562.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 41, verse 214.

⁴² Ibid., p. 33, verse 174.

⁴³ Nahj al-Balāghah, op. cit., p. 527.

intention which implores assistance from reason and gives to action its nature. The establishment of pure intention leads to manifestation of pure action. The prophet Muhammad states that "...your work is indebted to your intention"⁴⁴ and, "...action is associated with intention".⁴⁵ Intention is the basis that determines the moral dimension of an act; it is not the consequence of an act that determines its moral status. The prophet Muhammad qualifies his position on intention by saying that "...when two take swords and willingly fight, the killer and the killed are both potential murderers. Because if the killed could have, he would have killed too."⁴⁶ The Prophet shows concern throughout his guidance about the purification of the intention which would result in purer actions. In this regard, he is quoted to have announced that "...I am not worried about your mistakes (wrong action from not knowing better). I am worried about your intentional actions".⁴⁷

The Prophet tries to increase the scope of good action, beyond the physical manifestation of it to include intention. He confirms the abstract form of good intention as having the value of a good action:

Whoever orders a good action, it is exactly like he has done it himself.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Nahj al-Fasāhah, op. cit., p. 71, verse 369.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 512, verse 2426.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 35, verse 184.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 540, verse 2612.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 212, verse 1048.

A pious man tries very hard to cause a good deed, whatever he can't do he wishes it.⁴⁹

Anyone admiring the action of a group, good or bad, it is the same as his actual participation in that act.⁵⁰

Whoever intends to commit a sin, upon abandoning the idea he has done a good deed.⁵¹

In the last statement we find that the constant process of evaluation and correction of intention is promoted by Islam. The insights conducive to following the path of morality in the intention and action of man is to be found specifically in the teachings of Islam. Some of the specific attributes of the virtuous soul according to Islam will be discussed in the following section.

Virtuous Action. Islam makes a clear distinction between moral action (good deed) and immoral action (bad deed). In some cases morally approved actions have more significance than worship or religious rituals. The Holy Qur'ān possesses the approved statement made by Solomon:

verily I have loved the love of good things,
better than the remembrance of my Lord, until
the sun sank behind the evil.⁵²

Some of the general characteristics of morality in the actions of man, to be followed by a virtuous soul, are manifested in the teachings of the leaders of Islam. Some examples are as follows:

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 225, verse 1125.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 580, verse 2810.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 581, verse 2716.

⁵²The Holy Qur'ān (Sura XXXVIII, Ayat 31).

The best act is the one which has a longer effect, no matter how small an act.⁵³

Whenever you decide to do something, try to foresee the result; if it seems good do it, and if it appears evil, avoid it.⁵⁴

A small work, done bearing insight, intelligence and expertise, is a big work; a big work, done by ignorance and foolishness, is a small work.⁵⁵

Slow (careful) action is from God and rush is from evil.⁵⁶

There are differences between actions. There are acts whose pleasure passes and troubles stay, and there are acts whose pain and hardship pass and pleasure remain.⁵⁷

Anyone who is after something and works hard to get it will taste success.⁵⁸

Take your heart from the world and put it to the work of the world. Don't postpone your today's responsibilities for tomorrow; at the time of security and pleasure don't ignore the worry of the future.⁵⁹

When the general concept of positively approved actions is established, the teachings of Islam extend their indoctrination of human virtues to the possession of proper attitudes for action. Islam insists on the establishment of the right attitude. Some of the examples of the common ideal being promoted for the establishment of

⁵³ Nahj al-Fasāhah, op. cit., p. 13, verse 73.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 33, verse 171.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 176, verse 873.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 241, verse 1201.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 380, verse 1793.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 622, verse 3662.

⁵⁹ Nahj al-Balāghah, op. cit., p. 376.

the proper attitude set forth by the prophet Muhammad, are as follows:

God likes you to complete whatever task you take on.⁶⁰

Work so hard with the idea that you won't ever die and worry about the completion of your action as if you will die tomorrow.⁶¹

Don't leave any work for tomorrow; every day has its own responsibilities.⁶²

Completing a good deed is better than starting one.⁶³

Avoid negligences that your living today and not tomorrow. If there is a tomorrow, act as if it is today, and if there is no tomorrow, there will be no regret.⁶⁴

The worth of an action depends on its outcome.⁶⁵

Among the actions initiated and controlled by man, the action of the tongue has received more attention in Islam than any other action. Islam, persuading men to the attainment of morality, confers validity on speech as one of the essential aspects of ethical existence. The work of the tongue, as it is often referred to, is responsible for the welfare of the whole body. Therefore Islam instructs the control of tongue and its morally approved use.

Upon rising in the morning, all parts of the body pay tribute to the tongue, and say fear God, because our welfare is in your hand. If you endure we shall endure; if you are evil,

⁶⁰ *Nahj al-Faṣṣḥah*, op. cit., p. 151, verse 746.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 70, verse 367.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 512, verse 2433.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 53, verse 271.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 202, verse 1006.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 567, verse 2741.

we shall act evil.⁶⁶

Khalif 'Alī finds men's speech so important as to represent his total existence. He says:

Until the statement is made, you are in charge of it, but when the statement is made, it is in charge of you.⁶⁷

You must perceive that your life is in debt to your tongue, and spend it wisely.⁶⁸

The emphasis, then, is on the control of the tongue, and thinking before saying. This emphasis leads to the fact that intention is more important than action or speech itself. Whenever one intends to be in control of his speech and his actions, he will face a greater responsibility.

Truthfulness. 'Truth' in Islam is attached to the concept of Allāh. His existence and manifestation to man is believed to be a paradigm of truth.

God is the truth, whereas what they call upon apart from Him is nothing but unreality.⁶⁹

In this passage "unreality" refers to the idols which the pagan Arabs worshipped along with Allāh before the true concept of Him was revealed. The description of Allāh contains many statements referring to Him as the Truth.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 35, verse

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 507.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 633.

⁶⁹ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura XXII, Ayat 61).

All this (creation) is possible because God is the Truth...⁷⁰

...are you not afraid of Him? Lo, such is God your Lord, the truth and what is there beyond truth but error?⁷¹

Islam, since it is claimed to be from Divine Revelation, is truth, if we are to accept the truth of revelation from the mouth of the prophet Muhammad. So truthfulness finds its origin in divinity and is dependent on Allāh's guidance for its attainment by man.

Is there amongst your associates any that guides you to the truth? Say 'it is God who guides to the truth'. Is He who guides to the truth worthier to be followed or he who guides not unless he himself is guided? What is the matter with you then? How do you judge?⁷²

From the emphasis of The Holy Qur'ān on the reality of truth in Allāh, the prophet Muhammad urges man as the "imitation" to bring truth into himself. Truthfulness, which can be exhibited in all the actions and intentions of man, is regarded in Islam as closely interrelated but different notions such as truthfulness in speech and truthfulness in commitment (promise, treaty or covenant). One must speak the truth, and this truthfulness in speech has a transfer effect on truthfulness in promise. Muslims who have been exposed to the truth, should not live any other way. Kahlīf 'Alī, stresses this position by stating:

Always take a stand for the truth. This stand should occur for the satisfaction of God and

⁷⁰ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura XXII, Ayat 6).

⁷¹ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura X, Ayat 32).

⁷² The Holy Qur'ān (Sura X, Ayat 36).

for no other reason. Fight for the truth and remember that an honorable death for a right cause is better than living under a system which is against your fundamental belief.⁷³

According to the prophet Muhammad, truth should never be hidden. If there are things that one cannot claim publicly, then one should examine the truth of such things. He claims that:

The top level, considering the state of goodness is when you are able to do publicly what you do privately.⁷⁴

Truthful action preceded by truthful intention needs courage of speech. Man's word as the mirror reflection of his thought should be always truthful, "...the best words are the words which are closer to the truth."⁷⁵ The prophet Muhammad connects the need for bravery of speech to the attainment of the truth in the following comments:

Tell the truth even though it is bitter.⁷⁶

The best participation, in promotion of your religion, is the truth that is said to the oppressor.⁷⁷

Accept the truth even though it is heard from an enemy or stranger; disregard the false even though it has come from the best friend.⁷⁸

Justice. In Islam, truth and justice are very closely associated. Justice without truth is not justice. Islamic doctrines of justice

⁷³ Nahj al-Balaghah, op. cit., pp. 102-103.

⁷⁴ Nahj al-Fasāhah, op. cit., p. 236, verse 1176.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 15, verse 81.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 447, verse 2101.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 75, verse 394.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 81, verse 428.

are essentially based on the equality of man. In creation, men are equal in their potential of becoming virtuous beings. In previous discussions we have noticed that men according to the prophet Muhammad are preferred over one another according to their state of virtuousness, the strength of their religious beliefs and their possession of knowledge. Khalīf 'Alī, who was famed for his strong support for equality of man and justice for all, expresses this view in the following example:

You see soldiers, celebrities, lawyers, merchants, farmers, rich, poor, strong and weak. Look at your own body parts for similarity. There are parts that are less important than others. Yet in a proper manner nails and fingers cooperate with eyes and ears in accomplishing the most precise task. As all these parts are of your body and are treated equally in their pains and pleasures, so should it be with different members of society. All should be treated with absolute equality and justice.⁷⁹

With this strong proclamation of equality Islamic justice has its source in divinity which is not influenced by the power of man. Man is supposed to strive after and uphold justice, but justice does not come from him. He is merely a follower of the path of justice demanded by Allāh. He is a suitable representative who follows the Divine Justice in his living environment. The prophet Muhammad stresses his high regard for Justice by stating that "An hour of justice is better than a year of worship".⁸⁰ Justice in Islam is not subject to any vested, material influence, and Muslims are persuaded to see justice prevail even if they themselves lose:

⁷⁹ Nahj al-Balaghah, op. cit., p. 242.

⁸⁰ Nahj al-Fasāhah, op. cit., p. 410, verse 1936.

The virtuous man is the one who strongly supports rightfulness against his own benefit.⁸¹

Since Islam contains the teachings of the Divine Justice, it is the right path to be followed by everyone. In the Islamic view, it is not tolerable to live under any condition apart from virtuousness, with equality and justice derived from the divine guidance of Allāh.

Islam advocates the strengthening of a conscience sensitive to justice. If one is a true follower of justice and rightfulness then his conscience cannot accept anything against them. When one steps away from the path of justice, his conscience then acts as an inner awakening force to point out to him the truth, and influence him to repent and take a corrective measure. The conscious awareness of rightfulness and justice results in developing a supportive attitude for it. Khalīf 'Alī is quoted, in tradition, to have spoken about justice as follows:

Rightfulness and justice are like a clear water which is drinkable. With any deviation from them, the water loses its taste, color and smell⁸² and becomes not drinkable.⁸³

Loyalty and Trustfulness. Loyalty and trustfulness are attributes of a good Muslim highly regarded in the pre-Islamic virtues of the desert, as we know from expressions of poetry and tradition. The loyalty practiced in pre-Islamic times was confined largely within

⁸¹Ibid., p. 9, verse 43.

⁸²Islam teaches its adherent to clean themselves and drink "Kor" water (clean water). In doing so Islam introduces three signs without which water is not "Kor". The three signs indicating the impurity of water are supposed to be the color, the taste and the smell.

⁸³Nahj al-Balāghah, op. cit., p. 31.

kinship groups. This virtue is best described by T. Izutsu who in referring to loyalty during the pre-Islamic culture, states:

It was mostly practical within the bounds of the tribe, and within this narrow sphere, loyalty ruled absolute and supreme. It manifested itself as the most disinterested self-sacrifice on behalf of one's kinsmen, the most faithful devotion to one's friends, and also as the greatest fidelity shown in the keeping of a covenant plighted and trust committed.⁸⁴

From both the related verses of The Holy Qur'ān and the apostolic tradition it is clear that faithfulness and loyalty, with their nomadic origin, are significant items of the code of ethics.

This attribute had two specific applications in the realm of Islam. One was a social application among the believers of Islamic theology, and the other was in the religious sphere concerning the relationship between Allāh and man. The first application is merely a refined form of the traditional loyalty, with an extended scope from the members of a clan or a tribe to a larger scale of brotherhood based on Islamic faith. But the faithfulness and loyalty to Allāh receive special attention.

And when we imposed a covenant upon the prophets and upon Thee (prophet Muḥammad), and upon Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus, son of Mary, we imposed upon them a solemn covenant that He might question (on the last day) the faithful concerning their loyalty. He has prepared for the unfaithful a painful chastisement.⁸⁵

In this passage, we are told that on the Last Day of Judgement there will be two division, those who were faithful and loyal, and the unfaithful who have been, as always, ungrateful to the Grace of Allāh.

⁸⁴Toshihiko Izutsu, op. cit., pp. 86-7.

⁸⁵The Holy Qur'ān (Sura XXXIII, Ayat 7).

It is highly significant that the loyalty commanded in this passage is between Allāh and his chosen creatures.

The "trustful" man in the light of Islamic teaching refers to one who speaks the truth under any condition and can be relied upon to maintain this virtue. In the content of The Holy Qur'ān this epithet is given to such respectable figures as the Virgin Mary, Abraham, Joseph and to all pure and sincere believers.

The Messiah, son of Mary, was no more than an apostle just like other apostles who had passed away before him. And his mother was trustworthy. They both ate food.⁸⁶

Joseph, though trustworthy, give us your opinion on (the strange dream)...so that I may return to the people and let them know the truth.⁸⁷

"The Trustful" (Ṣadiq), was the honorary epithet of the Khalīf Abū Bakr. According to tradition, the circumstance which led to the account of this virtue for Abū Bakr was as follows:

When Muḥammad, immediately after the famous experience of the ascension to heaven and the miraculous night journey to Jerusalem, gave a detailed account of this experience, grave doubts were aroused in the minds of all Muslims who were there with regard to its truthfulness. The only person who did not allow his faith to be shaken by Muḥammad's account was, we are told, Abū Bakr. He alone kept on saying, while the apostle described in detail what he had seen in Jerusalem, 'That is true. I testify that you are the apostle of God.' At the end of his account Muḥammad said, 'and you, Abū Bakr, are indeed trustworthy.'⁸⁸

⁸⁶ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura V, Ayats 75-79).

⁸⁷ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura XII, Ayat 46).

⁸⁸ Toshihiko Izutsu, op. cit., p. 92.

Trustfulness in the Islamic notion follows honesty in action. The prophet Muhammad advised his followers on trustfulness by stating "...be honest with one who trust you".⁸⁹

Bravery and Courage. In pre-Islamic conditions it was natural to consider courage an excellent attribute of man. The severe nature of the desert and the conditions of isolation from any organized large scale court of justice left Arabs with high regard for skill, physical strength, courage, and military powers. Under such conditions the possession of courage was in some cases the only alternative to death. The Islamic view does not differ from its previous condition in praising courage and downgrading cowardice. But the occasions in which bravery is needed are different from those in pre-Islam, when courage was more often directed against a neighbor rather than in support of him.

Islam, does not confine the virtue of bravery to its physical application. Rather, Islam recognizes as much bravery in the utterance of the truth under adverse conditions as the act of physical bravery in the battlefield. Believers are supposed to decorate themselves with this attribute and use it according to the Divine Will of Allāh.

No matter how they may swear by God that they belong to your community (Muslim Community), they are in reality not of you, for they are a people of a cowardly nature.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Nahj al-Fasāhah, op. cit., p. 21, verse 117.

⁹⁰ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura IX, Ayat 56).

Thus, we find the concept of bravery in Islam unlike that in pre-Islam in its application. That is, even though man is supposed to have fear, this fear is a pious fear of going against the Divine Guidance and fear of the Day of Judgement. The Holy Qur'ān provides a definite direction for bravery and by this creates a formidable weapon in the hands of believers who are taught not to fear enemies. A true believer is ready to confront physically or verbally any obstacle in the way of rightful living in accordance with the will of Allāh.

Generosity. According to the Islamic codes of ethics, generosity, a mood of giving, stands out as an excellent quality and genuine proof of nobility. A true sense of being charitable underlies the manifestation of generosity. The virtue of generosity had already been recognized in pre-Islamic culture. But Islam deviates from pre-Islam on one ground. Islam denies the act of generosity as a noble deed if it is even slightly intended to make a show. This misuse of the virtue is referred to as an evil passion. The motive underlying each act of generosity should be sincere and intended, to show gratitude toward Allāh:

O Believer, you must not make your charity vain by grudging and making disagreeable remarks as one who expends his wealth simply for the pleasure of an ostentatious display, and not from his belief in God. On the last day such a man may be compared with a smooth stone covered with soil; a rainstorm smites it and leaves it smooth and bare.⁹¹

There is also another aspect of generosity that Islam points out with

⁹¹The Holy Qur'ān (Sura II, Ayat 264).

a view to all the persuasions of man's conduct. Generosity should not involve wastefulness:

Give the kinsman his due, and the poor and the wayfarer. But never waste in sheer waste, for those who squander are brothers of satan...⁹²

So we find the concept of generosity in Islam a positive quality which requires qualifying conditions. If not properly used, this virtue loses its validity and is not generosity at all.

Alms giving is a religious duty of every Muslim yet it must not be done for show, nor must it be wasteful. The intention must be chaste and honest. With generosity, a man shows his gratitude to Allāh for the material possessions He has bestowed on him. This is also an indication of man's detachment from materialistic values. He uses this quality to imitate Allāh's Divine Generosity to man. Man should be helped by man as an imitation of Allāh's willingness to help man.

Patience. Patience, following a problem, is an Islamic way of holding to one's belief and remaining virtuous. This quality seems to be an essential ingredient for courage. Courage, if based on wisdom, often requires the application of patience. There are many occasions wisdom dictates patience and the proper timing for bravery. The prophet Muhammad advises his followers in promoting the realm of Allāh to be patient. He says, "...when you are not capable of changing a situation, have patience, God will assist you".⁹³ Patience is therefore

⁹²The Holy Qur'ān (Sura XVII, Ayats 26-27).

⁹³Nahj al-Fasāhah, op. cit., p. 40, verse 208.

a helpful virtue in the time of hardship. A true Muslim is supposed to be able to endure any condition, pain or sorrow, with minimum complaints.

The nature of torment requiring patience is not only physical. Believers can be abused by sneers, scorn, derision and overbearing haughtiness. They must be able to endure any type of abuse and not try to retaliate. It is not important to retaliate if it does not serve a useful purpose. It is important to bear injury with grace, be patient, and focus one's efforts on the accomplishment of the final goal, which is in the rightful path of Allāh.

Bear though with patience what they say against thee, and try to avoid conflict with them graciously. Leave me to deal with those who cry lies, Lord of prosperity in this world and do Thou re-spite them for awhile.⁹⁴

In this respect, patience is associated with one's strength of belief in Allāh. It is the quality of enduring abuse when your beliefs are condemned. It is a testing ground for the strength of one's belief to withstand troubles and not weaken.

Politeness, Good Nature, and Friendliness. Islam, throughout its teachings, strongly emphasizes consideration for others, politeness, good nature and friendliness in actions. Fairness dictates to a virtuous Muslim that he should care about others and not to offend them. The prophet Muḥammad states, "...don't be one of those who is hard on others and easy on himself".⁹⁵ Respect for the rights of

⁹⁴ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura LXXIII, Ayats 10-11).

⁹⁵ Nahj al-Fasḥah, op. cit., p. 520, verse 2483.

others also is accompanied by politeness. In fact, politeness in Islam is considered a sign of a man's wisdom, since it creates a friendly feeling. The prophet Muhammad confirms this position by saying, "...he who is not polite is not wise".⁹⁶ Politeness includes good nature, temper and facial gestures. The prophet Muhammad indicates that:

Dearer to me is the one amongst you who has a good nature.⁹⁷

God doesn't like people with grim faces for their brothers.⁹⁸

The one with the better temper is a better man.⁹⁹

Politeness and good nature are important virtues, but Islam insists that these virtues go beyond passive gestures. Friendliness, willingness to help others, and the strengthening of friendship are some active aspects of good nature. The prophet Muhammad advocates:

Make your greeting heard, which is a strength to your friendship.¹⁰⁰

Offering a verbal greeting is optional, but answering a greeting is obligatory.¹⁰¹

Islam recognizes that these virtues are promoters of a friendly atmosphere in which sincerity and piety are victors. But, the friendliness, politeness and good nature should lead to helpful

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 622, verse 3061.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 183, verse 907.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 150, verse 740.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 15, verse 84.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 73, verse 381.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 377, verse 1775.

attitudes and leniency. This is the view behind the persuasion of the prophet Muhammad to promote leniency, and positive efforts to get along with others, as the sign of wisdom:

The wisest is the one who is lenient in dealing with people.¹⁰²

One final consideration in our discussion of good nature and friendliness is intention. One must feel friendliness in his heart before he can show it. A difference between the expression of the face and the feeling of the heart is a sign of hypocrisy, unless one, out of his politeness and good intention, is trying to endure his pain and not to spoil the mood of others. Islam does not advocate extremism in anything. A pious man is supposed to be serious in his intention and action. But according to the Islamic code of morality, there is no conflict between seriousness of mind and being good-natured and friendly. Friendliness and good nature should not imply frivolity. Man should have a serious intention in the proper conduct of his life, but he should not show a grim face and inconsideration to others to indicate his seriousness.

Other Virtues. There are many other virtues that are significant in Islamic morality, but they are not taught separately and independently. They are presented and confirmed, either in brief statements or during teachings related to other matters. In this part, we shall try to briefly discuss the nature of these ethical decorations of the soul in the eye of Islamic morality.

Islam takes a clear stand for the strong advocacy of moderation. Moderation in anything means not too much or too little.

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 69, verse 358.

Extremism in any matter, even in being religious, is disapproved.

The prophet Muhammad states:

It is nice to be moderate at the time of richness (do not overspend), it is nice to be moderate at the time of poverty (do not become a miser), and it is nice to be moderate in worship.¹⁰³

Worship as much as you are able to; if in over doing it you harm yourself it is just like you have harmed your God.¹⁰⁴

Moderation in all facets of human involvement is considered an act of wisdom.

Even though there are many situations in which a Muslim is persuaded to take a stand and fight for rightfulness and justice in defense of his belief, he is always advised to side with peace whenever he can. Khalīf 'Alī wrote a memorandum to his army officers emphasizing the following considerations:

Whenever you have to fight, fight; but never ignore that sign for peace. We like to accomplish our goal of social justice without pulling our arrows out and without engagement in a war. This peaceful intention should be respected whether we initiate it or our enemy.¹⁰⁵

Peaceful intention, peaceful action, and respect for peace brings about peaceful existence. So, the true Muslim should follow a peace-seeking avenue and exhaust all possibilities before acting otherwise. Khalīf 'Alī states that "...you are confident of the reliability of a peace offer, prefer it over a sure victory."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 539, verse 2608.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 412, verse 1949.

¹⁰⁵Nahj al-Balāghah, op. cit., p. 556.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 275.

The word of a man in Islam should be valuable. He should use his wisdom and take time to think before making a statement or a commitment. A promise is a strong commitment. The prophet Muhammad shows his serious concern about a poor promise by stating that "... keeping your promise is a necessary requisite of having faith".¹⁰⁷ Kahlīf 'Alī points out the severe consequence of getting used to ignoring one's pledge by stating:

I believe, that a tribe which does not respect their pledge, no matter how large or powerful is doomed to be demolished.¹⁰⁸

Man as an imitator of Allāh finds the Divine Revelation considerate of this point:

God never breaks his promise, though most men do not know it...¹⁰⁹

Allāh, in the content of The Holy Qur'ān's revelations, gives many promises to man. His whole system of justice in the final day of resurrection is based on the promise of heaven to the followers of Divine Guidance and hell to the sinful heathens. The Divine emphasis on keeping one's word in imitation of Allāh impresses the faithful with the value of a trustworthy statement and a true believer's word. In such an atmosphere, where everyone tries to keep his word, there will grow a trustful attitude which is the direct effect of Islamic ethical doctrines.

Contentment, the antithesis of greediness, in the Islamic view saves man from being a slave to his ambition and wishes. Rather

¹⁰⁷ Nahj al-Fasāhah, op. cit., p. 172, verse 847.

¹⁰⁸ Nahj al-Balāghah, op. cit., p. 275.

¹⁰⁹ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura XXX, Ayat 5).

it advocates satisfaction with the present status regardless of the desire for improvement. The prophet Muhammad, in approving this pious virtue, claims that, "...contentment is a wealth which never ends".¹¹⁰ Allied with moderation, contentment brings happiness to the soul and is a component of piety. The prophet Muhammad using contentment as a qualifier, makes a clear distinction between a good man and a bad-mannered man in the following comparison:

The best man is the one who is slow to anger and quick to content; a worse man is the one who is quick to anger and slow to content, and if you see a man who is quick to anger and quick to content or slow to anger and slow to content he is something.¹¹¹

Humility, in opposition to arrogance, is a quality of a pious man. Islam does not approve self-grandiosement, pride, arrogance, or conceit. The man who humbly and truly submits to the Divine Will keeps this humility as a virtue throughout his social life. However, Islam does not approve of humility which can be interpreted as feebleness, fear or a low self-image. In fact, Islam emphasizes that one should not be overly humble in the presence of an arrogant man so that one will not imply admission of inferiority nor approval of his arrogance.

The prophet Muhammad, admiring some of the virtues of man in regard to humility states:

There are three virtues which are considered excellent, humbleness in power, forgiveness

¹¹⁰ Nahj al-Faṣāḥah, op. cit., p. 420, verse 1980.

¹¹¹ Ibid., pp. 89-90, verse 469.

while victorious and forgiving without obligation.¹¹²

According to this statement, humility is not a characteristic which has any association with lack of security, fear of superiority, or flattery of others in expectation of favors. Rather, the humility which is most approved is manifested at the time of power, victory, prosperity, and security, indicating a lack of desire to show any feelings of superiority, though having demonstrated it.

Respecting parents and elderly people whether created by the teachings of Islam or merely a development of previous concerns, has had a long effect and strong impact in most Muslim communities. Man is obliged to be polite, considerate and helpful to his parents and to older people in general. Since Islam clearly advocates the right actions and points out the wrongdoings in moral conduct, Muslim followers tend to be very conscious of the way they are treated. Even a grim face or unkind look could hurt the feelings of a Muslim parent. That is the reason that the prophet Muhammad, to prevent any misconduct which could result in creating a hard feeling, carefully reminded man:

If you look at your father angrily, you don't have good manners.¹¹³

This respect is also connected with the spiritual attachment of a believer to his faith. One can respect his close relatives as long as his belief is not in danger. Nothing should be able to weaken his connection with religion.

¹¹²Ibid., p. 74, verse 385.

¹¹³Ibid., p. 543, verse 2625.

Obedience is one of the features of respect for parents and older people. But, once you have become a true believer, no outside influence, including parents, should be able to subvert one's submission to the teachings of Islam. Yet, in cases where parents try to interfere, respectful tolerance and patience are desirable until Allāh comes to assist by helping the parents to find the truth. The Holy Qur'ān clearly encourages a respectful attitude toward parents, but it puts a condition there by stating:

Be grateful to Me and thy parents...but in case they attempt to induce thee to associate with me what thou has not knowledge of, then disobey them. But keep company with them, in this world, in a popular way.¹¹⁴

Islam encourages an attitude of strong determination. To accomplish any worthwhile deed, hard work and determination are the keys to success. Kahlīf 'Alī, a promoter of determination, states that:

Man, you are created with an astonishingly precious treasure inside you which is your will power and determination. At the time that you are determined you hear advice very well and find ways to act on your will. At the time that you don't hear well and you won't try to find a way to accomplish your goal you have a weak will power and determination.¹¹⁵

Determination must have direction, and the teachings of Islam through the revelations in The Holy Qur'ān indicate to man the path to be followed and the goals to be reached with a determined attitude and hard work in order to attain piety. Determination, in the Islamic view is one of the key attributes of success. It must be present and

¹¹⁴ The Holy Qur'ān (Sura XXXI, Ayats 13-14).

¹¹⁵ Nahj al-Balāghah, op. cit., p. 395.

accompany patience in order to restore the strength of belief in pursuing the path of piety.

Islam is a great advocate of man helping man, physically, financially and/or intellectually. This helpful attitude was partly discussed during the description of generosity and almsgiving. But, according to the approved and traditional confirmation of the Islamic view, this assistance should be offered willingly. Khalīf 'Alī persuades the followers of the Islamic faith to participate in assisting others by stating that "...if you are able to help, don't hesitate".¹¹⁶

Thankfulness is present in the whole system of Islamic morality. Thankfulness is represented by human reaction to the signs of Allāh. Allāh has provided many features for the existence of man, which man must recognize and be thankful for. This virtue, according to Izutsu, is observed in its perfect form when it is reciprocal.¹¹⁷ Man is thankful to Allāh, and Allāh is thankful to man for being the follower of his divine teachings.

Whosoever does good of his own accord verily,
God is thankful, He is aware of everything.¹¹⁸

Man's thankfulness, which is the gratitude to Allāh for his divine love of man, is carried over to human affairs. Showing gratitude becomes the exhibition of a sensitive feeling of kindness and consideration.

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 176.

¹¹⁷Toshihiko Izutsu, op. cit., p. 201.

¹¹⁸The Holy Qur'ān (Sura II, Ayat 153).

Vices

In previous discussions the manifestation of a moral dichotomy in Islam was discussed. Islam is not content with pointing out virtues and good deeds alone. It also is concerned with the vices and bad actions that lower the position of man in the Court of Allāh.

In the following discussion, we will attempt to describe some of the more pronounced vices which have been subject to Islamic ethical criticism.

Lying. In opposition to truthfulness lying is a vice which, in Islamic morality, is degrading to man. According to The Holy Qur'an, lying is a vice that mostly non-believers exhibit. A true believer of the faith of Islam is not supposed to be attached to material goods as primary attraction. Desire to obtain or protect these goods could lead to the disapproved act of lying or other such acts. A Muslim should refrain from lying and deceit, not in fear of man, but out of fear of Allāh. Islam is truth, and wherever it reigns fallacy vanishes.

Say the truth has come and falsehood has vanished.
Surely, falsehood is ever bound to vanish.¹¹⁹

In this sense, any word which contradicts Islam is also considered false and blasphemous.

To some extent Islamic moral instruction about lying seems to be contradictory. On the one hand, Islam denounces all statements of falsehood, however minute. The prophet Muhammad emphasizes this

¹¹⁹The Holy Qur'an (Sura XVIII, Ayat 81).

point by saying:

Avoid telling lies, no matter how minute.
You should not even give a false promise
to your child.¹²⁰

Lying in any form is a vice. Yet, in other teachings, Islam is lenient and accepts falsehoods of a certain type, as not being degrading to the liar. The Prophet explains this situation in the following passage.

There are three types of lies that are not so sinful. A lie in a battle field (referring to the tricks and strategies), because wars have tricks, a lie which pleases a woman (compliment or social lie) and a lie which improves a relationship between two people (a white lie).¹²¹

In this context we observe that the teachings of Islam are lenient about lying where an improvement of a situation is possible. So, slight deviation from truth which brings a situational improvement is not strongly denounced, when it is not beneficial to the liar, or is in accord with the expectations commonly held for certain activities (e.g., war).

Islam also recognizes that when one practices falsehood he loses faith in other people and himself. In fact, this seems to be the germ of social distrust. The prophet Muhammad points out such an effect of falsehood by saying that "...the one who does not lie, believes other people's words easier, the one who speaks lies, considers everyone to be a liar".¹²² So, a liar, in addition to commit-

¹²⁰ Nahj al-Fasāhah, op. cit., p. 201, verse 999.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 458, verse 2165.

¹²² Ibid., p. 118, verse 581.

ting a sinful act, loses his good judgement and becomes suspicious of everyone's truthfulness. This state of distrust makes it hard for him to get along well with others.

Anger. Man is supposed to control his emotions and not exhibit unpleasant conduct offensive to others. Anger, a harsh reaction to a situation, is not itself degrading as much as the inability to control the anger. The prophet Muhammad confirms this position by saying:

Do you want me to point out the strongest man? He is the one who can control himself best in time of anger.¹²³

Islam recognizes that when one is angry he is not in the best state to make sound judgements. Islam claims that whenever one is angry, the devil is ruling him. The prophet Muhammad suggests two specific remedies for anger. One is to avoid making any statement which brings regret, and the other is to disengage oneself from the irritating situation.

Whenever in anger try to remain quiet.¹²⁴

Whenever in anger, if you are standing, sit down and if sitting lie down.¹²⁵

Violence, Oppression, Refraction and Transgression. These vices, like the others, have a common effect; they obstruct good judgement and justice. Men exhibiting such tendencies are absolutely detested in the moral community of Islam. The prophet Muhammad emphasizes the divine views of The Holy Qur'an on the quality of man by pointing

¹²³ Ibid., p. 87, verse 463.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 43, verse 225.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 43, verse 224.

out these deviant vices. Muslims should be safe among Muslims, and one should not harm others to benefit himself.

The most detested individuals in God's eye are...violent men.¹²⁶

The best faith is the one that people are safe and secure within, and the best Muslims are people who do not harm others with their hand (physical) or tongue.¹²⁷

The worst men to God are the ones whom people are afraid of because of the injuries they give.¹²⁸

Once more, Islam, in regard to these vices, suggests purification of intention and mind. The Prophet promotes such a practice to avoid violence, oppression, refraction and transgression by stating that:

The best thing is to start a day without a vicious thought about anyone.¹²⁹

Greed. Islam does not denounce greed in every circumstance. In fact, greed in pursuit of knowledge, and greed for accomplishment of good deeds is recommended. But greed in the accumulation of earthly goods brings deviation from absolute devotion to Allāh. According to Islamic teaching, greediness is an obstacle to wisdom. The prophet Muhammad states, "Greed takes the wisdom away from scholars".¹³⁰ This obstruction of wisdom, according to the prophet Muhammad, causes a change of behavior which is not approved in the Islamic code of ethics:

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 4, verse 18.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 60, verse 307.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 173, verse 854.

¹²⁹ Ibid., p. 75, verse 395.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 406, verse 1921.

People who are hungry for wealth at any cost and from any source, or anyone, are more dangerous than two hungry wolves in the sheepfold.¹³¹

The more one tries to satisfy his greed, the hungrier for wealth he becomes. The prophet Muhammad concerning this observation states that, "...greedy people are the poorest people".¹³² The reason for this is that they are constantly in the state of need. Man should be in sole control of his faculties and his intention. With the elevation of his spiritual aspect, man should recognize the nature of greed and use it in its acceptable form of willingness to do good and pursue knowledge, and abandon it in the desire for material goods.

Jealousy. Khalīf 'Alī warns Muslims that "jealousy keeps you from being a good man".¹³³ One consequence of this vice is the churning of emotions which obscure wisdom and inhibit rationality. The prophet Muhammad advocates that "...whenever you are jealous don't persecute anyone, and whenever you are suspicious don't accept it as the fact".¹³⁴ This is because jealousy distorts wisdom and forces a person out of the state of fair-mindedness. Consequently, it causes him to do injustice. Not only is jealousy a vice, degrading the quality of man, it also has the peculiar quality of feeding on itself, increasing its demands.¹³⁵ The prophet Muhammad on many occasions denounced giving in to the feeling of jealousy. Some of his statements include:

¹³¹Ibid., p. 532, verse 2565.

¹³²Ibid., p. 80, verse 421.

¹³³Nahj al-Balāghah, op. cit., p. 179.

¹³⁴Nahj al-Faṣṣḥah, op. cit., p. 38, verse 199.

¹³⁵Nahj al-Balāghah, op. cit., p. 488.

Flattery and jealousy are not from a pious man except in pursuit of knowledge.¹³⁶

Avoid the feelings, which are: jealousy, greediness and too much pride.¹³⁷

Three things destroy a man; giving in to jealousy, following impetuosity and self-admiration.¹³⁸

Arrogance and Selfishness. Pride, according to the teachings of Islam, is not a vice until it grows out of proportion. Too much pride, as opposed to humility, is probably one of the most detested vices in Islam. Arrogance is associated with self-admiration which is not an approved attribute of the soul. Every believer should have pride in himself, his family, his community and his religious belief. But exhibition of arrogance is not an approved moral quality. The prophet Muhammad states that:

Rebellion afflicts bravery, self-glorification afflicts nobility, lie afflicts words, forgetfulness afflicts knowledge, extravagance afflicts charity and impetuosity afflicts religion.¹³⁹

Too much love for oneself obscures other virtues. The prophet Muhammad further remarks about arrogance that "...addiction to arrogance is an avenue to refractoriness."¹⁴⁰ In other words, arrogance affects rationality and causes injustice.

According to the teachings of Islam, one should have a true

¹³⁶ Nahj al-Faṣṣḥah, op. cit., p. 509, verse 2410.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 194, verse 1290.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 271, verse 1290.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1, verse 1.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 12, verse 6.

image of oneself. Without it, one does not properly recognize either his weaknesses which need improvement, or his outstanding qualities which can be a good example for others to follow.

Khalīf 'Alī recognizes the importance of a proper self-image in one's daily involvements. He states:

The first step toward developing a good sense of responsibility is to know oneself. A person possessing a true self-image deals with his responsibilities according to his image of his reliability.¹⁴¹

The one who does not understand himself assists his own destruction.¹⁴²

Selfishness and arrogance hinder the establishment of a true self-image. Therefore, they are destructive of the self. The ill-affect is not only in their creation of a distorted self-image but also in their promotion of a poor image of others. In short, Islam advocates equality and does not tolerate any haughtiness and selfish exhibition of arrogant feelings.

Many of the following vices have either been referred to in the popular quotations of the leaders of Islam or they are referred to briefly in the teachings of Islam

Fear. Aside from the pious fear of Allāh, any fear which creates a negative effect on man in his following the divine guidance is a weak and low quality. The prophet Muḥammad states that "...the worse vices are too much parsimony and too much fear".¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Nahj al-Balāghah, op. cit., p. 17.

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 489.

¹⁴³ Nahj al-Faṣāḥah, op. cit., p. 332, verse 1803.

Gossip. This is a bad manner by which a Muslim can show hypocrisy in his friendship. The prophet Muhammad reminds people that "...gossip is reminding your brother what he would not appreciate".¹⁴⁴ Consequently, it is a destructive force in the community of Islam.

Sharp Tongue. This is a social vice which degrades other Muslims. For this reason, the prophet Muhammad makes a strong statement against it by saying, "...entrance to heaven is prohibited to the person with a bad tongue".¹⁴⁵

Grim Face. At the opposite pole from friendliness, making practice of showing a grim face is a low quality. The prophet Muhammad delivers a message by stating that, "God does not like people who have a grim face for their brothers".¹⁴⁶

Miserliness. This vice refers not only to acquisition of material things but also to the teaching of knowledge to others. The prophet Muhammad, in regard to the disapproved quality of stinginess, states that:

The comfort of a miser is less than anyone else.¹⁴⁷

The most miserly is the one who is stingy in greetings.¹⁴⁸

...parsimony keeps you far from God and close to hell.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁴Ibid., p. 433, verse 2044.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., p. 280, verse 1330.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., p. 158, verse 740.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., p. 81, verse 431.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., p. 113, verse 570.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., p. 374, verse 1758.

Being miserly is opposed to generosity and alms giving, which are important features of a believer who is anxiously willing to spend earthly goods in the way of Allāh.

Stubbornness and Obstinacy. The prophet Muḥammad delivers the feeling of Islam against such degrading qualities by saying, "...the most detested people to God are those who are obstinate and violent".¹⁵⁰ He also describes the act of stubbornness as foolish conduct by his prohibiting statement, "...avoid stubbornness, which starts in stupidity and ends in regret".¹⁵¹ Stubbornness is thus considered to be rooted in irrationality, which is contrary to the teachings of Islam.

Extravagance. This is a vice that is present in many human efforts. Extravagance, in Islam refers to going beyond moderation to the level of unreasonable excess, and becoming wasteful. Extravagance, in both physical and non-physical practices, is strongly prohibited by the Islamic faith. The prophet Muḥammad emphasizes this point by condemning such practice, even in religious practices. In this regard, the Prophet warns the Arabs to "...avoid extravagance in religion—your ancestors died practicing this."¹⁵²

The numerous virtues practiced in various Muslim communities slightly differ from one another by cultural influence, by the preservation of the originality of ideas and by their basic effect on people's life. However, in this investigation, we have limited our

¹⁵⁰Ibid., p. 4, verse 18.

¹⁵¹Ibid., p. 203, verse 1008.

¹⁵²Ibid., p. 200, verse 995.

discussion of the attributes of the soul to the pronounced and commonly practiced virtues and vices that are in general agreement with the original teachings in Islam.

Summarizing the discussion of this chapter, Islamic belief stipulates that the existence of self is a unified compliment of body and soul. Islam recognizes the body as a vital part of self. However, Islam finds the soul responsible for man's conduct in his existence. Islamic teaching involves itself in promotion and demotion of various virtues and vices as the attributes of the soul. Islamic faith takes the position that the body and soul are equally important in the self-expression of man in life, with the soul being responsible for action. Islamic confirmation for the inclusion of physical expression in human conduct is noticed in the practice of the most formal, frequent, and highly spiritual prayer in Islam, namely namāz. In this spiritual practice, Islam has recommended a special physical pattern of conduct followed by verbal prayers. In this context, man in his religious communication with Allāh is represented by his body and his soul. Therefore, we can conclude that this unified effort of body and soul, according to Islamic belief implies that the whole self should participate fully in physical education and sport. This view, signifies the importance of the quality of soul during man's participation in physical education and sport. In the following chapter, there will be an examination of the Islamic principles and doctrines, including the notion of body and soul with its attributes, as they provide valid implications for physical education and sport.

Chapter V

IMPLICATIONS OF ISLAM FOR PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT

Physical education and sport activities, according to contemporary concepts in education, are considered an effective means of contributing to the total growth and development of the individual. The scope of physical education is so extensive that its body of knowledge is derived from many disciplines. In fact, physical education has been recognized as an eclectic discipline because of its extensive use of the selected findings of other disciplines.¹

It is the intention of this chapter to examine the established doctrines of Islam, discussed previously, in search of the appropriate implications for physical education and sport. To accomplish this task, it is intended to examine the doctrines of Islam in order to find significant contributions concerning the following topics:

1. Implications of Islam concerning the philosophy of physical education and sport.
2. Implied contributions of Islam to the aims and objectives, teaching and learning, and general concepts of physical education and sport.
- A. Implications of Islamic Belief Concerning the Philosophy of Physical Education and Sport

Islam promotes the idea that man should lead a meaningful existence. Acknowledging his imperfection, man is persuaded to strive

¹Charles C. Cowell and Frances L. Wellman, Philosophy and Principles of Physical Education, Printice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1963, p. 5.

for improvement. In previous discussion this constant effort was referred to as the state of "becoming". Man, according to Islam, a chosen creature of Allāh, is encouraged to improve every aspect of his existence including his body and soul. This effort to improve makes man capable of a pious life and able to meet the responsibility of being the representative of his creator on earth. Improving self and living a pious life is recognized by the Islamic faith as the ideal philosophy of life. The confirmed principles, held by Islam, necessary for those striving for a better life are: the use of logic, rational behavior, and the strong pursuit of knowledge. The prophet Muḥammad urges that "the acquisition of knowledge is compulsory for every Muslim".² Khalīf 'Alī remarks that "I see people mourning for the dead body; but I never see anyone mourning for the dead mind".³

The Better life, in Islamic logic, does not occur merely by the accumulation of knowledge but with the proper use of knowledge. This emphasis indicates that the use of knowledge in actual action is an important extension of knowledge itself.

Knowledge and action are like inseparable twins.⁴
They can't function properly without one another.

Therefore knowledge should be experienced, and only that which is applicable to proper action should be followed. This view has been emphasized in contemporary western thought by the pragmatists who promote personal experience as an important educational instrument. Islam, therefore, implies the importance of experience in accumulating

² Nahj al-Faṣāḥah, op. cit., p. 63, verse 324.

³ Nahj al-Balāghah, op. cit., p. 613.

⁴ Ibid., p. 505.

knowledge with respect to physical education and sport. According to Islam knowledge that successfully withstands the test of applicability should be labeled approved; then it should be learned and implemented in actions.

The realist considers that in the field of physical education, physical development is the ultimate goal.⁵ According to Islam there is no significant benefit in developing the physical aspect only and ignoring the unified expression by both body and soul. Physical assets are insufficient without the guidance of the soul, expressing human worth in the realm of Allāh. Therefore, Islam implies a close inter-dependence of both body and the conducting soul which must be considered in physical education and sport. Islam recognizes physical inability as a human weakness. In order to sustain a balanced state of well-being, man should develop his physical features, but not in isolation from his ethical and spiritual development.

The Islamic faith's philosophical guidelines for physical education and sport are best approximated by the Western idealist's position. This position lays stress on the development of the individual and proclaims that:

Man is capable of development physically, aesthetically, intellectually, socially, politically, religiously and morally. A man who neglects one or more of these features is one-sided.⁶

The Islamic faith promoting a balanced development is in agreement with the idealist in this view. That is, Islam encourages physical

⁵Earle F. Zeigler, Problem in the History and Philosophy of Physical Education and Sport, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963, p. 44.

⁶Ibid., p. 45.

development, but not in isolation. Islam also is inclined to appreciate aesthetic values. The importance and appreciation of poetry in Arab culture attests to this. The Prophet confirms this appreciation by stating that:

Beautiful hair is wealth, a beautiful face is wealth, beautiful language is wealth just like wealth is wealth.⁷

The high regard that Islam holds for the intellectual development is one of the strongest persuasions of the religion. Social development is also a high concern of the Islamic faith. Islam actively teaches the social values and suggests approved manners and attitudes in the interactions of man in society. In fact, man is supposed to prove his religiousness, piety and worth in his social behavior. Islam has always engaged itself in political concerns. Islam has gained strength through its advocacy of equality and justice as the prime foundations of a political system, and its opposition to corruption, injustice and tyranny.⁸ Concerning the moral development, the Islamic emphasis on morality is described in the previous chapter which discussed the attributes of the soul and is in accord with the idealistic position on the matter.

Reviewing the Islamic position in relation to the already suggested philosophical statements in physical education and sport, it is noticed that Islamic views are not in total agreement with all the pronouncement of any single school of philosophy. In summary, Islam implies that the philosophical guide-lines for physical education and sport must be in accord with the total goal of man's existence.

⁷Mahj al-Faṣāḥah, op. cit., p. 290, verse 1378.

⁸Mahj al-Balāghah, op. cit., p. 171.

In the overall view, Islam implies that man expresses his existence with his entire being. Therefore, in every aspect of his development he must be concerned with his total development. In the following discussion the implications of Islam in regard to the specific aims and issues of physical education and sport will be considered.

B. Implied Contributions of Islam to the General Concepts, Aims and Objectives, and Teaching and Learning in Physical Education and Sport

Man's experience of superior existence on earth is not confined to the sensation of physical improvement. Rather, Islam emphasizes that man should be a follower of the path of piety. He is a physical and spiritual being, and his existence is evaluated by his total conduct. In this respect, his physical existence cannot be independent from his spiritual and moral aspects. The soul, as we observed, has a superior and yet dependent relation to the body.

All the physical manifestations bear the stamp of intention. They are initiated, directed, and controlled by the soul. There is no existence outside the unity of body and soul. So, man, even in his physical performance, in reality is performing with his body and soul.

The inseparable state of body and soul, advocated by Islam, presents a unique perspective for physical education and sport. Body and mind experience existence together, and should search for salvation together. The contribution which can be inferred from this view dictates that the field of physical education cannot be concerned only about the physical aspect of man.

The teachings of physical education cannot be effective if the full nature of man's existence is ignored. Islam, recognizing

man as an ethical being and the product of his social belief, implies that physical education's and sport's contributions to man's process of "becoming" should be concerned with his state of morality. Hence, these activities should promote unified participation inclusive of body and soul.

Since in Islam man is persuaded to live a meaningful life in his society in accordance with the Divine Will of his Creator, the teachings of physical education and involvement in sports, should promote such a meaningful intention. These educational efforts should provide guidance, and cause proper development of the body and the attributes of the soul. Islamic teaching implies that any physically superior man without the appropriate attribute of wisdom is a more destructive individual than people who have ignored their physical development.⁹ Since man, in his actions, relies on physical performance and physical expressions in physical conditions, he should improve this important aspect of his living along with the soul. Ignoring the body will result in a lessening of the ability to do good, the same as ignoring the soul will result in immorality.

The nature of physical education and sport is enlightening to man's comprehension of his physical limitations. Islam approves the establishment of such an awareness. Men who see power all around themselves, who recognize their own limitations, and depend on outside protection, tend to develop a respect for the source of power. In short, Islam confirms that engagement in physical education and sport is a worthy instrument for developing human qualities, and a means by

⁹Nahj al-Faṣṣḥah, op. cit., p. 622, verse 305.

which man may gain knowledge of himself and his limitations and find new respect for his Creator in all his mightiness. Any human engagement which promotes an awareness of Allāh, indicating His superior nature, is approved by Islam.

The Islamic emphasis is also a constructive force in terms of its influencing the promotion of hard work, personal sacrifice, endurance in adversity, and determination. Islam has repeatedly suggested that man should establish goals for himself. His ultimate goal is unity with Allāh. To attain this objective, man needs to possess determination which will remain strong throughout his life. He also needs to actively participate in the happenings of this world, accomplish good deeds, and work hard toward his salvation. The prophet Muḥammad advocates hard work by saying:

Work hard, with the impression that you will never die (you will continue to do so) and worry about your work with the impression that you will die tomorrow.¹⁰

Personal sacrifice is an approach highly recommended by Islam. These sacrifices are often in the form of a disregard for the worldly pleasures and earthly materials while pursuing the ultimate goal. This personal sacrifice, along with the painful adversities of life, may present hardships and unpleasant situations. Muslims, as suggested previously, are strongly persuaded to endure hardship gracefully, show patience, and not lose faith. The patience prescribed by Islam is not a complete submission to the event. The Muslim holds on to his intention, but if the conditions are not appropriate, he gracefully waits for the right moment to accomplish his goal.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 70, verse 367.

Islam indicates respect for the traditions which do not drastically oppose its revealed teachings. In fact, this respect is quite evident in the attributes of the soul prescribed by Islamic morality. It is apparent that many virtues of the pre-Islamic era have gained the confirmation of Islam. Undoubtedly, many of the traditional virtues in their original form, or with slight improvements, are among the Islamic virtues. However, Islam, whenever applicable, has interested itself and corrected traditional misconceptions.

The implications of the above view, concerning physical education and sport, are examined in the following discussions. Islam advocates respect for traditions which do not inhibit progress. But, it does not hesitate to correct or deny any of the outmoded ones. According to the Islamic approach, traditions should undergo an evaluative process. Traditional activities which have kept their values and esteem should be respectfully preserved. The ones needing re-adjustment or improvement should be corrected, and incompetent, harmful and defective traditional influences must be eliminated.

This approach has many applications in physical education and sport, where, in some cases tradition is strongly preserved. Man's heritage of sport includes events which had a specific application in the life of early man, such as throwing the javelin, wrestling, running, horseback riding, rowing, fencing and other activities related to the style of living in the past. These events, along with many other traditions preserved as the treasures of physical education and sport, such as The Olympic Games, should then, according to Islamic implications be evaluated in order to be preserved, corrected or eliminated.

One of the extremely valuable implications of Islam for physical education and sport lies in the applicability of physical education and sport to life. Religious issues taught by Islam are always intentionally promoted to be followed in daily routine activities. Islam persuades its adherents to live a pious life, apply the teachings of Islam in their daily living, and be aware of Allāh and His Divine Will at all times. This concept of the transfer of teachings applicable to life should also be considered in the field of physical education. If the activities will have even a remote transfer value, it is a worthy involvement. Man continues to live a physical and spiritual life. Therefore, his learning of the skills, virtues and other educational intentions in physical education and sport must be applicable to life's conditions, and transferable to the ongoing process of striving for a good life. The "Good Life" promoted as the ultimate goal of physical education, is harmonious with the general educational objective of promoting the "Good Life".¹¹ It is obvious that the connotation of the goal, "Good Life", is not confined to the time where man is involved in a physical activity. In activities there are immediate gains and long range gains. Both sets should possess values transferable and applicable to the activities of life. Islam promotes the intention of the transferable value of physical activities in the construction of a good life. The Khalīf 'Alī states that:

We learn the skills of combat and practice so
that we can put our hand to life for combat

¹¹Charles A. Bucher, Foundation of Physical Education, The C. V. Mosby Company, St. Louis, fifth edition, 1968, p. 141.

against real and abstract problems. This is the battle that counts.¹²

This seems to be a valid implication for physical education and sport to examine the transfer values of its teaching in the actual conduct of life.

Implied Contributions of Islam to the Aims and Objectives of Physical Education and Sport

Islamic teachings express little, if any, direct reference to the aims and objectives of physical education. But, there are many concepts in Islam that suggest valuable implications in that regard. On the other hand, contemporary literature in the field of physical education has proposed the aims of physical education and sport. The approach used in this section consists of describing already established objectives, followed by the implications from the Islamic view point in regard to them. In addition, there will be consideration of any other contributions introduced by Islamic teachings.

Charles Bucher, in Foundations of Physical Education, studies the most prominent formulations of the aims of physical education. Noticing a high agreement among them, he then describes the major goals of physical education in the four distinct categories of physical development, motor development, mental development, and social development. The Islamic teachings cannot contribute scientifically sound contributions to present day physical and motor development. This fact does not imply that Islam takes little notice of physical development and the importance of motor excellence. Islam supports any development, fostering the improvement of human performance in all

¹² Nahj al-Balaghah, op. cit., p. 197.

possible aspects of his existence. In fact, the persuasion of the prophet Muhammad encouraging his followers to be physically active and engage in sports, is noticable in his following statements:

Archery and horsemanship are the two best games.¹³

Learn Archery and Horsemanship (sports which were popular at the time). The man who practices archery, trains his horse, and strengthens his tongue, is involved in worthwhile activity.¹⁴

His reference must not have been solely for preparation of war since he has commented that "God likes people who make arrows with good intentions and who learn archery with good intentions"¹⁵ and war-like intentions are not good intentions. This implies that the Prophet does not believe that the making of arrows or engagement in archery should only be with the intention of killing in war, but as a worthwhile activity in man's life as well. Islam regards man as essentially an ethical being. Therefore, physical accomplishments, as an improvement of his existence, relates positively to his moral conduct. The proper utilization of physical assets to the best of one's ability is a moral responsibility. The Khalīf 'Alī points out this fact, and complains about the misuse of physical skill in the following statement:

There are people who wear a useful sword and are honored for their physical skill. But, they usually take advantage of others. The use of this gift is very important. One should be human, in an ethical sense in order to be respected and followed by humans.¹⁶

Therefore, physical excellence like knowledge, according to Islam, should be pursued, but pursued constructively.

¹³ Nahj al-Fasāhah, op. cit., p. 15, verse 81.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 52, verse 267.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 153, verse 758.

¹⁶ Nahj al-Balāghah, op. cit., pp. 196-7.

Contemporary aims and objectives of physical education utilized in this chapter are those proposed by Charles Bucher:

Organic Development:
 Improvement of the body systems
 Muscular strength
 Good posture and proper weight
 Muscular endurance

Neuromuscular Development:
 Development of skills
 Physical efficiency

Intellectual Development:
 Cognitive learning

Social Development:
 Initiative
 Responsibility
 Self-confidence
 Friendship
 Emotional maturity
 Cooperation
 Adjustment
 Leadership
 Followership
 Ethics
 Democracy
 Recreational attitude
 Good citizenship¹⁷

Islam has not expressed its views in direct relation to all the aims of physical education. Consequently, implications are drawn from Islamic teachings to such matters.

Organic Development. Organic development is advocated by Islam. This confirmation is in light of an Islamic view approving the organic improvement of existence in this world. Organic development has not been much discussed in Islam, but some of the relative notions are as follows:

¹⁷Bucher, op. cit., pp. 162-180.

Strength of the body is approved in Islamic concepts. The Prophet is quoted to have shown an interest in sports that require strength. He states that "of your games, angels will attend to watch wrestling...".¹⁸ However, Islam does not recognize physical strength as the only asset of a strong man. Rather, Islam announces that the strong man is the one who is strong in character. The prophet Muhammad has distinguished the strong by saying:

Do you want me to point out the strongest man?
He is the one who can control himself better
in time of anger.¹⁹

In other words, the development of physical strength is necessary, but not as the sole representative of man's strength, rather as a worthy part, to be used at the proper time, with the proper intentions, and in the proper manner.

The development of muscular endurance is approved and emphatically promoted by the teachings of Islam. Islam encourages perseverance in spite of hardship and adverse conditions. The Khalif 'Ali, not satisfied with the self-indulgence of his soldiers, remarked:

When you have a firm belief and excellent attitude to accomplish a task, you should be able to operate under conditions such as hunger, thirst, covering long distance on foot, carrying heavy loads and having a fatigued body. Under the leadership of the Holy Muhammad we learned to keep our excellence and fence under these conditions, not self-indulgence.²⁰

Again, endurance in Islam is not confined to physical stress. Man, as repeatedly instructed by Islam, should endure physical and

¹⁸ Nahj al-Fasāhah, op. cit., p. 544, verse 2631.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 87, verse 463.

²⁰ Nahj al-Balāghah, op. cit., pp. 364-5.

mental stress with his total being. This means the mind assists the body to endure better, and the body maintains its support under mental stress.

Concerning the acquisition of physical skills, neuromuscular improvement requires a long period of practice depending on the complexity of the task. Practice is a means by which one may acquire skills. Islam recognizes the importance of practice, and uses it in the promotion of religious practices. The prophet Muḥammad recognizes that an absence of practice will cause the loss of excellence in physical skill. He then denounces a poor attitude toward practice by stating that:

Whoever learns archery and then abandons it,
he is committing blasphemy of God's given
blessing.²¹

Practice is not limited to physical activities. Islam's high regard for practice is reflected in almost every phase of this faith, such as the practice of the attribute of piety, practice to strengthen belief, and physical practice. The *naḥḥ* (the most respected prayer in Islam which was promoted by the prophet Muḥammad) entails some physical movements. It is recommended that it be performed five times a day.

Physical education and sport activities are not limited to the use of the body alone. As a training field for social and intellectual development, the field of physical education is concerned with non-physical development also. Islam implies that practice for every approved activity that one would develop is necessary.

²¹ Nahj al-Faṣāḥah, op. cit., p. 600, verse 2934.

Intellectual Development. It seems redundant to repeat the Islamic stress on intellectual development since it has been discussed in previous chapters. It is appropriate, however, to search for valid implications of Islam which serve to enlighten some aspects of intellectual development in physical education and sport.

Concerning cognitive learning, Islam's great emphasis on the pursuit of knowledge has much application to physical education and sport. Islam denounces engaging in any activity without an adequate amount of intellectual preparation. This thoughtful approach increases the validity of any action. The prophet Muhammad clarifies this point by stating:

A small task that has been done by insight, intelligence and expertise is a big task.
A big task done out of ignorance and thoughtlessness is a small work.²²

Islam recognizes success in physical activities requiring strength, speed, courage and determination.²³ Physical activities and sports require intellectual insights such as knowledge of the game, knowledge of skills, knowledge of strategies, and knowledge of teaching methods. The prophet Muhammad recognizing this aspect commented that physical combat encourages the use of tricks²⁴ (strategies), then tries to promote mental alertness in the field by saying that "a pious man does not fall for the same trick twice".²⁵ According to Islamic teachings the use of a well-informed mind in the sport

²² Ibid., p. 176, verse 873.

²³ Nahj al-Balaghah, op. cit., p. 44.

²⁴ Nahj al-Fayānah, op. cit., p. 296, verse 1406.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 530, verse 2552.

field is important. The Khalīf 'Alī's agreement with this emphasis on knowledge and wisdom is apparent by his comment about not taking pride in non-intellectual possessions.

Don't ever get too proud of your wealth or physical strength. Wealth is not an everlasting gift and a fever can weaken your strength rapidly.²⁶

There are times that the thoughts of age are much more useful than the power and strength of the young.²⁷

Alertness and a well-informed mind are two assets to be considered in physical education and sport.

Whenever in doubt don't hesitate to step back. Don't hurry the event.²⁸

Until you have measured your opponent try to avoid a contest with him.²⁹

Awareness of the history of an activity and analysis of the previous events are common features of Islam, which promote insight into such activity.

Always study the past. Ask your heroes how they live, what happened to them and how they left their glory and success behind. Then ask yourself where you have lived, what you want to do and how you would like to leave everything behind.³⁰

Awareness of historical development is a useful knowledge leading to an analysis of events and planning for future actions. The applicability of this approach in physical education and sport is extensive.

²⁶ Nahj al-Balāghah, op. cit., p. 511.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 475.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 287.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 747.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 286.

One should constantly be involved in the process of evaluation and correction. Historical analysis prevents repetition of past mistakes and provides useful insight into actions concerning physical education and sport.

Social Development. Islamic theology has shown concern for the inter-relationship of man and his social existence. In fact, Islam has offered many guidelines to solve potential problems in man's society. Physical education is involved in the educational process of promoting social maturity. There are some guidelines in Islam which denote a direct relation to the teachings of physical education and sport concerning the goal of developing social maturity. Some of the applicable guidelines of Islam concerned with specific issues of man's social development, and beneficial to physical education and sport are introduced in the following discussions.

Concerning initiative, Islamic teachings make it everyone's responsibility to do a good deed whenever possible. Islam confirms the quality of initiative which is an important notion in the field of physical education and sport. The quality of being an initiator has a definite application in physical education and sport activities. The Khalīf 'Alī finds initiative an important step towards victory. He develops this idea in the following statement:

Where does winning start? It starts with involvement. If you never get involved, you never succeed.³¹

Physical activities, according to Islam, are considered meaningful and worthwhile human involvement. Therefore, initiating them and

³¹ Nahj al-Balāghah, op. cit., p. 171.

promoting their correct use is a good deed, and is approved by Islam.

Man, in the Islamic conception, is responsible for all his actions. Therefore, he should develop a sense of responsibility in all of his daily activities. The Islamic conceptions of a responsible attitude have already been explained. A statement by the Khalīf 'Alī sheds light on the accomplishment of responsible attitude. He explains that:

The first step toward developing a good sense of responsibility is for one to know himself well. A person, developing a true self-image, deals with his responsibilities according to his image of self-reliability.³²

Physical education scholars have already recognized the need for the development of self-reliability as an important step toward becoming responsible. The Khalīf 'Alī, one of the original promoters of Islamic ideology, connects the self-understanding of reliability with the sense of responsibility. A man's appraisal of himself results either in his refusal to accept an inappropriate responsibility or his confident acceptance of the task.

Islam advocates strong determination as the proper attitude for the fulfillment of responsibilities. The Khalīf 'Alī tries to instill awareness by saying:

Men, you are created with an astonishingly precious treasure inside of you. That is your will power and determination. The time that you are determined, you hear well, and find ways to accomplish your wish. The times when you don't hear well, and don't try to find a way, or to accomplish anything, then your will power and determination is not strong.³³

³² Ibid., p. 17.

³³ Ibid., p. 395.

Physical education and sport tasks provide opportunities to accept responsibility. Teaching responsible attitudes requires a true self-image and a determined mind. Emphasizing these points during the teachings of physical education would be in accordance with Islamic views. Believers in the Islamic faith are often assured that they are following the right direction toward their salvation. The Islamic faith, recognizing the numerous forces available to divert man from the path of Allāh, tries to build up his confidence in his belief of the necessity for his religious efforts. Physical education and sport can be used as the training field for self-confidence. Islam affirms the necessity of self-confidence in action and human conduct, but does not specifically refer to physical activities as the accepted educational medium to build such a quality. For building up self-confidence in religious beliefs, Islam persuades its adherents to acquire knowledge, elevate their understanding, and become true followers of rightfulness and justice. Once an action is affirmed to be the right one, a determined and confident attitude is needed for following through. Therefore, it is implied that Islam recognizes that in order to build up confidence with respect to one's performance in physical activities one must understand himself and the task, learn the activity well, practice, and approach one's performance with a determined attitude.

One of the most prominent social values of physical education programs and sport activities is the promotion of friendship. Islam holds a high regard for the promotion of friendship. The prophet Muḥammad states that "the best thing is friendship..."³⁴ He

³⁴Nahj al-Faṣṣānah, op. cit., p. 75, verse 390.

stresses the value of friendship by remarking that "man gets his strength from his brothers".³⁵ The Islamic stress on friendship, and its teachings in this regard, possesses valuable implications for friendship in physical education and sport. Islam recognizes that people who can make friends easily are more able than ones who are weak in this task. The Khalīf 'Alī states that:

The one who cannot make friends is a disabled being, and more disabled is the one who loses friends easily.³⁶

Islamic teaching implies that in physical education mere promotion of friendship is not sufficient. This promotion should be accompanied by lessons on the nature of friendship, the strengthening and weakening forces of friendship, proper attitudes toward friendship, and careful selection of suitable friends. Some of the contributions of Islam, which describe the quality of friends and friendship, and which should be suggested, considered and promoted during physical education and sport activities are presented in the following discussion.

We can already notice that Islam encourages men to actively participate in making friends. In fact, in some cases, man is encouraged to make friends with not only strangers, but with individuals who, for some reason, have shied away from his friendship, although, in later discussions, we find that Islam does not want to force friendship on anyone.

One should never feel that one has a limited source of friends. The Khalīf 'Alī affirms this position by saying that:

³⁵Ibid., p. 624, verse 3073.

³⁶Nahj al-Balāghah, op. cit., p. 458.

Don't get discouraged if your acquaintances act like strangers. There are many strangers who would act like a friend.³⁷

He further instructs that:

There are three considerations which show sincerity in friendship: greeting him, respecting him in public, and calling him the best name he possesses.³⁸

Another emphasis of Islam concerning friendship is moderation.

Islam takes the position that extravagance is wrong. The prophet Muhammad recommends "be moderate in friendship and enmity. Your friends may become your enemy and your enemy may become your friend".³⁹

Islamic teachings discuss the qualities of a good friend. According to the prophet Muhammad the best friend is the one who tells you your faults.⁴⁰ He also shows his concern about the bad friend in the following statement:

God protect me from the enemy at home (presumed friend) who hides my goodness and broadcasts my mistakes.⁴¹

A good friend is also described to be the one who helps when assistance is needed and remembers his friend when he is forgotten.⁴²

In Islamic thinking, even though the addition of new friends is strongly encouraged, there are conditions in which friendship is not considered to be suitable. The prophet Muhammad suggests that:

³⁷ Ibid., p. 458.

³⁸ Nahj al-Fasāhah, op. cit., p. 272, verse 1293.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 14, verse 74.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 316, verse 1508.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 100, verse 515.

⁴² Ibid., p. 73, verse 384.

Your good acquaintance is the one whose benefit you desire and whose ill will you do not fear. Your bad acquaintance is the one whose ill will you are not safe from and whose good-will you are hopeful for.⁴³

He also recommends, "don't associate with the one who does not think you are his kind".⁴⁴ This discussion of friendship bears upon the selection of suitable friends. Islam persuades its adherents to select friends who possess the approved virtues (these virtues were explained previously). It is better not to have any friends than to have the wrong type of friend. The prophet Muhammad says: "loneliness is better than bad company; good company is better than loneliness."⁴⁵ Some additional qualifications for friends aside from virtue are discussed in the following quotation:

Find friendship with selected people who encourage you when you do good and discourage you when you do wrong.⁴⁶

Selection of proper friends is an important task, since according to the Islamic line of thought, one is judged by his friends. The prophet Muhammad affirms this position by the following statements:

Anyone who mingles with criminals is susceptible to accusation.⁴⁷

Avoid bad friends, that people may not judge you by them.⁴⁸

In summary, we can imply that the educational goal of promoting friendship, advocated in physical education and sport needs

⁴³ Ibid., p. 87, verse 461.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 517, verse 2461.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 643, verse 3194.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 275, verse 1299.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 200, verse 975.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 203, verse 1012.

a special teaching effort. On sport grounds, the word friendship is often emphasized by teachers, coaches and leaders of this field. Islamic beliefs imply that friendship should be promoted in physical education for the improvement of the qualities of soul as well as for physical improvement. But the dichotomy of good and bad and the nature of friendship should be clearly defined and practiced so that this human relationship will construct valuable outcomes improving the social existence of man.

Concerning emotional maturity, Islam highly advocates self-control in human conduct. One must be in control of his emotions and maintain his rational conduct. It seems redundant to single out various emotions and discuss the Islamic views concerning them, since they have been previously treated while examining the attributes of soul. The significant consideration seems to be the suggestion of training for control of passion. The prophet Muhammad states that "your worst enemy is your untrained emotion".⁴⁹

Islam recognizes that emotion can affect performance. The Khalif 'Ali, recognizing the affect of emotional readiness in combat, advised his army:

While fighting, clinch your teeth together and roar like an attacking lion with a broken chain during the approach to the enemies' front. This angry conduct, if supported by a wise and brave soul, gives you much more power than the power of sword alone.⁵⁰

Although this persuasion is supposed to result in bold and adventurous action, the Prophet also states, "don't let your emotion control your

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 66, verse 338.

⁵⁰ Nahj al-Balaghah, op. cit., pp. 112-113.

wisdom".⁵¹

This emphasis has much application in the contemporary practice of physical education and sport. Coaches consciously try to prepare their athletes emotionally prior to contests and during contests. Islam recommends that this emotional preparation must be accompanied by good thinking. One should never lose his rationality. Recently victory has begun to serve as the ultimate goal of many sport contests. This approach has resulted in an emphasis on "win at any cost". Under emotional pressure prevailing in such a situation an athlete is liable to lose sight of the state of wisdom and ignore the virtuous conduct in order to win. The control of emotion in its highest state is a sign of bravery and strength.

The height of bravery is when one gets angry, his anger leads him to madness, his face turns red and he shivers with madness and then regains control of himself.⁵²

Islam recognizes that in this world, man must consider victory to be possible.⁵³ But when a victory is strongly desired, man is motivated emotionally to such a degree that his actions could lead to victory.⁵⁴ Man in physical contests, according to Islam should exhibit his physical excellence, in accord with his ingrained religious standard. In other words, his physical assets should be in the control of his soul, expressing the unified state of his body and soul. The prophet Muhammad requests virtuousness prior, during and after

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 288.

⁵² Nahj al-Faṣāḥah, op. cit., p. 395, verse 1872.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 545, verse 2638.

⁵⁴ Nahj al-Balīghah, op. cit., p. 362.

the contest. Some of his teachings are as follows:

A man's victory is enough when his opponent
is in trouble.⁵⁵

Whenever you overpower your enemy forgive
him in gratitude for power.⁵⁶

This shows a high regard for wisdom and emotional control in physical contests. As indicated previously, physical education and sport in contemporary education serve as a training field for physical, motor, intellectual and social development. Therefore, control of emotion, maintaining a rational state, and the preservation of moral standards throughout the physical engagement, are valuable implications drawn from the teachings of Islam.

Islam also eases the emotional effect of defeat by advocating a determined attitude which will bring about future victories.

Have patience, your defeats will be steps
toward your victory.⁵⁷

With this approach, the emotional impact of defeat is re-directed to an attitude more determined to achieve success, and less prone to the exhibition of bitterness and unrestrained emotional expressions.

Charles Bucher in his book Foundations of Physical Education, stresses that "a physical education program that would teach individuals to play cooperatively should stress leadership and followership traits."⁵⁸ Islam recognizes the importance of leadership qualities in man's social existence. Therefore, emphasizing the development

⁵⁵ Nahj al-Fasāhah, op. cit., p. 454, verse 2139.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 44, verse 227.

⁵⁷ Nahj al-Balāghah, op. cit., p. 485.

⁵⁸ Bucher, op. cit., p. 200.

of such qualities, it claims that the success of a program or a task is directly related to the quality of leadership present.⁵⁹ Leadership, according to Islamic tradition, is a quality that everyone should develop because "everyone is a leader somewhere".⁶⁰ According to the view of physical education implied by Islam, the Islamic view reflects the emphasis that leadership should be fostered in everyone, since everyone is, at least, the leader of his own action. Islamic teachings exhibit concern about poor qualities of leadership. The Prophet, in an attempt to show the importance of leadership and the quality of a leader states: "Everything has an affliction that could destroy it. The destroyer of this religion is bad leader".⁶¹ According to Islamic belief the welfare of people depends on the quality of their leadership. The prophet Muhammad claims that "there are two groups of people; who, if they are pious people, are fortunate, and if they are malevolent people are in adversity. These two groups are scholars and leaders."⁶²

Islamic teaching spells out, in detail, some of the qualities of a good leader. The Khalīf 'Alī characterized the qualities of a leader during the selection of his army officers as follows:

A leader must be noble and chaste. He must be kind, alert, and fatherly at the time of sorrow and defeat. He must set an example by having a high spirit and a brave heart. He must plan carefully, so that his plan

⁵⁹ Nahj al-Faṣāḥah, op. cit., p. 460, verse 2177.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 460, verse 2177.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 473, verse 2255.

⁶² Ibid., p. 393, verse 1853.

guarantees his success, and his followers security. He must not flare up at every little incident. He must be able to overcome his anger, exhibit patience, tolerance, and meekness. He must give the impression that even though he is firm, he is also kind, and even though he is kind he is obeyed. I like them when they are humble with the weak, and fearless with bullies.⁶³

The leader must have wisdom in all his actions. He should not encourage flattery from sycophants, and gain pleasure from it.⁶⁴ Islam holds a leader responsible for all the actions of his followers.⁶⁵ The Khalif 'Alī's memorandum to his governors emphasized this:

If you have evil leaders they represent your guidance. If their wrong doings are ignored, it seems you have actually taken part in their action.⁶⁶

So, a leader should be able to take command, be alert, lead and guide, and be responsible for the total operation. Some of the significant Islamic guidelines concerning leadership, which make valid contributions to the fostering of this quality in physical education programs, are as follows:

Whatever you promise your followers, make sure you keep your word.⁶⁷

If you gain your follower's confidence and respect they will follow you closely, and act as mirrors of your virtues.⁶⁸

⁶³ Nahj al-Balāghah, op. cit., p. 245.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 34.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 41.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 75.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 246.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 246.

A leader should share his glories with his followers and praise them properly.⁶⁹

A leader who abuses his followers foolishly has taken a sword against himself.⁷⁰

Whenever a leader is angered (not in control of his emotion) the devil is victorious.⁷¹

Don't let a group set themselves above the rest, using your power in destruction of others.⁷²

Aside from rare cases, there should be no secrecy which creates distance between a leader and his followers.⁷³

Concerning followership, Islam, with its promotion of a rational existence, does not approve of blind obedience. During physical activities and sport there are more opportunities to be a follower than to be a leader. Followership should also be developed in its correct form. In life Islam does not recognize the leader to be more important than the follower. Instead, Islamic ideas suggest that there is absolute equality between leader and follower. The difference is in their responsibility. "If the leader gives an order, the follower takes the order. The best of both makes for a successful operation".⁷⁴ As the leader is obligated to lead well, a follower must learn to follow well. Kahlif 'Alī states:

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 120.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 519.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 34.

⁷² Ibid., p. 712.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 120.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 120.

A soldier who must follow an order with his whole heart should be aware of his importance in the security of his family, home and country. He should think of all of these in following an order, to accomplish his task to the best of his ability.⁷⁵

Therefore, a follower should do his task with a good understanding of his role, and his contribution to the total operation. Having established such an understanding, a follower then should have faith in what he is doing. Islamic teaching states that followers must be armed with the powerful armour of faith in what they are doing, and that no one should be forced to follow.⁷⁶

Outstanding followership, according to Islamic belief, necessitates the evaluation of orders by the follower. The prophet Muhammad instructs that:

Listening and following are good qualities, but, if you are ordered to follow a sinful act, don't heed it.⁷⁷

In other words, man should maintain his rational conduct whether a leader or follower. In distinguishing some of the lapses of followers, the prophet Muhammad cautions:

Don't follow and support a leader who takes advantage of his position by taking your share, lying, treating you badly, asking your consent for his ugly actions, and expecting you to accept his lies.⁷⁸

In the final analysis, the Islamic teachings explicitly advocate the proper followership in physical education and sport.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 120.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 645.

⁷⁷Kahj al-Faḡāhah, op. cit., p. 368, verse 1780.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 369, verse 1737.

Followership should be promoted with the maintainance of a rational disposition, and good judgement. There are grave consequences, recognized by Islam, in blind followership. Islamic teachings concerning followership possess implications that followership should be taught during physical activities. This role according to Islamic belief needs judgement as well as understanding one's role and contribution in the act of following.

Human ethics have already been discussed in the section dealing with attributes of the soul. The Islamic contribution to such entails a strong emphasis on the inclusion of ethical education in physical education and sport. Islam considers every educational ground the training field for human morality. Physical education, as an educational ground, offers a tremendous opportunity for the establishment and practice of human ethical qualities. Since, according to Islam, morality is one of the most important qualities of man, and physical education and sport are educational training ground they are apt to foster such qualities. Therefore, physical education and sport, if used properly, play an important role in the total education of man in his process of "becoming". Islamic teachings imply that the attributes of the soul are retained longer than physical gains, but both must be constantly practiced.

One of the qualities in the Islamic view of piety is being a good member of one's community. A pious man is helpful to others, concerned about the proper activities of his associates, aware of his environment, and respectful of the governing laws which provide equality and justice for all. Islamic beliefs imply that physical education, as a training field for human qualities, would recognize

the freedom of man and promote equality and justice with its teachings. Other aspects of being a good member of society such as: leadership, followership, initiative, responsibility, morality, and respect for others have been previously discussed. Islam also implies that physical education and sport must respect and support the laws governing man's actions in society. Islam is a religion with definite laws, and it promotes the supremacy of law in life. By providing definite rules and regulations in games, physical education fosters the quality of respect for and obedience of the law.

Implications of Islam Concerning Teaching and Learning of Physical Education and Sport.

In order to examine the Islamic principles in search of valid implications relative to the teaching and learning of physical education and sport, available information concerning the nature of teaching, the teacher, learning, and the learner will be discussed. Islamic doctrines discuss the teaching and learning process, but its proposals are general and not specifically directed to the physical educator.

Islam recommends that man should never stop learning. This implies that education should be an ongoing process throughout life. Therefore, it follows by implication from this that the teaching of physical education as an instrument of education is not confined to any one period of life; rather, its values should continue to assist man in his ongoing process of "becoming".

Islam does not limit the scope of learning to formal education. A man is constantly searching, and striving for improvement, and so learning. Islam suggests that asking and seeking guidance are

signs of wisdom and a part of the learning process. The prophet Muhammad affirms this point by stating:

My worst followers are the ones who don't seek guidance while making a decision when they are in doubt.⁷⁹

The Kahlif 'Alī proclaims that "the one who listens to the proper advise, accepts wisdom, and who can be guided is a saved person".⁸⁰

Consult the experts and be led in the right direction, but don't ignore him lest you be sorry.⁸¹

Since man's body changes with age, his physical needs and his educational concerns also change. Man, using physical activities to elevate his existence throughout life, should seek guidance wherever necessary for the proper training of his body.

Teaching, in Islam, evolved from the desire to help a believer to better himself.

In learning, be helpful to each other, and don't hide anything from one another. Deceit in knowledge is worse than deceit in wealth.⁸²

Teaching and learning according to the Islamic line of thinking, are not different. A teacher is a learner, and a learner is a teacher of what he learns. According to Islamic teachings, one should be involved in both processes, "the one who does not enjoy learning does not enjoy teaching".⁸³ This statement implies that a teacher must keep abreast of the developments in his field and pursue knowledge

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 382, verse 1801.

⁸⁰ Nahj al-Balāghah, op. cit., p. 398.

⁸¹ Nahj al-Faṣāḥah, op. cit., p. 54, verse 275.

⁸² Ibid., p. 236, verse 1178.

⁸³ Nahj al-Balāghah, op. cit., p. 470.

that he does not have. The prophet Muhammad states that:

People who teach others and forget themselves
are like a candle which gives light to others
and yet burns down itself.⁸⁴

In summation, Islamic thinking implies that a physical education teacher should be willing to extend his horizon and be eager to teach his findings.

Islam has suggested certain procedures in the act of teaching that have useful implications for the physical educator.

When guidance has the smell of sincerity, comes from the heart, and is delivered with a skillful, warm, and motivating speech, it is more effective than the sharp edge of a blade and the threat of an arrow.⁸⁵

That is to say, sincerity, dedication to teaching ideals, a motivating approach, and versatility are useful qualities for effective teachers.

Reward and punishment is a method of teaching promoted by Islam. A teacher should discourage disapproved conduct and encourage approved actions. The Khalif 'Alī explains the necessity of reward and punishment by saying:

A devoted servant, who receives no praise for his devotion, will turn indifferent. And an evil doer who is not punished will follow his wrong doing with more courage.⁸⁶

Reward for proper action is strongly encouraged by Islam. But one should "prevent punishment as much as possible. It is not as dreadful to make a mistake in forgiveness as it is in punishment".⁸⁷ There-

⁸⁴ Nahj al-Faṣṣḥah, op. cit., p. 563, verse 2725.

⁸⁵ Nahj al-Balāghah, op. cit., p. 33.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 240.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 21, verse 119.

fore, "when in doubt, stop the punishment".⁸⁸ Punishment is an accepted corrective method, but Islam encourages forgiveness.

Some of the other characteristics of teaching promoted by Islam are as follows:

In teaching don't be harsh, be cheerful and don't act angry, and, if someone is mad at you, stay quiet.⁸⁹

Teach and don't be harsh. A teacher is a better man than an angry man.⁹⁰

In giving advice, don't be always critical. Mix your criticism with praise and your sharpness with kindness.⁹¹

The story of people who teach others and forget themselves is like a candle which gives light to others but burns down itself.⁹²

In the final analysis, teaching and learning are serious matters and Islam offers a specific approach that can be evaluated and utilized for a teaching approach in physical education and sport.

Although, as stated before, the Islamic doctrines have not formulated direct statements pertaining to physical education and sport, all the discussions in this chapter possess some significant relation to this field. The most significant implication that can be obtained is the concept of focusing on physical education not merely as a means of physical improvement, but as a field in which

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 22, verse 120.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 414, verse 1457.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 414, verse 1948.

⁹¹ Nahj al-Balāghah, op. cit., p. 476.

⁹² Nahj al-Fasāhah, op. cit., p. 563, verse 2725.

man can practice, develop and improve his entire existence. This implication also indicates that during the teaching of physical education attention should be directed toward man's entire existence rather than only his physical aspects.

An overall observation of the tenets of the Islamic faith reveals many general agreements between its views and those that are the commonly accepted in the West concerning physical education and sport. For the most part, the differences lie in the intensity with which or the degree to which a certain principle is stressed.

Chapter VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. SUMMARY

It has been the intent of this study to examine the original teachings of Islam, in an attempt to draw implications of those teachings for physical education and sport. The historical overview of Islam examined the conditions prior to Islam, and described those factors, such as land, culture, religion and government, which molded the society into which Islam developed. In the discussion concerning religico-philosophic commitments of Islam there was an attempt to establish a thorough understanding of the major concerns of the Islamic faith and philosophical ideas on various issues which were contemporary to the time in which the original teaching of Islam was done. The treatment of educational views in Islam showed the paramount importance of education in Islamic culture. This emphasis can be detected in all educational concerns of Islam. Islam regards the improvement of man through education as an essential process in his becoming a pious man and conducting a meaningful life.

The existence of man in the Islamic belief is constituted as the unification of body and soul. Islam is highly concerned with the health of body. Man, even though evaluated by his action which is the unified effort of body and soul, is persuaded to engage in physical activities and develop his physical aspect and so improve his existence generally.

The soul, on the other hand, was described as in charge of man's actions, and determining his worthiness. The attributes of the soul were examined to establish an understanding of the ethical concerns of Islamic belief. Islam advocates the leading of a meaningful life. Similarly, Islam suggests that piety is an approved way to attain the meaningful life. Man should be encouraged to be concerned about his physical, social, ethical, spiritual and intellectual development.

Learning is a process of acting. The Islamic belief implies that knowledge should be combined with experience and should be implemented in action. Implications of Islamic doctrine suggest that physical education is a tool of education, with its field a training ground for both human physical improvement and social, intellectual, and moral development. Therefore, teaching physical aspects in isolation from moral knowledge and ignoring the governing components of such knowledge is not an approved implication of Islamic belief.

Action should bear the stamp of intention, according to Islamic teaching. Therefore, instruction of physical education should contain the goal of the purification of intention.

Islam implies that in action one must set a goal, show determination, exhibit patience in adversity, endure personal sacrifice and enjoy success in an honorable manner. Islam advocates man's engagement in activities which are significant to the terms of his existence. This notion implies that physical activities should be selected and be pursued with their usefulness and applicability in mind.

B. CONCLUSIONS

Islam does not directly teach the contemporary, advanced scientific methods of physical development, though it supports such teachings in principle. Islamic teachings provide particularly valid implications in regard to the social, intellectual and moral developments included in the aims of physical education, however. Implications of Islamic thoughts promote the use of practice for both physical and non-physical improvement. Islamic beliefs imply that an alert and intelligent mind is vital to man and should be decorated by ethical qualities. Islamic principles promote the ideas that physical education and sport should be an aid in developing initiative, a sense of responsibility, friendship, emotional maturity, a rational mind, consideration in victory, patience in defeat, leadership and followership, cooperation and a sense of justice.

Islamic doctrine implies that in physical education and sport activities bad habits should be taught as well as good ones. According to Islam, physical educators should define and promote the specific qualities of leadership, followership, friendship, justice, truthfulness and other issues of instructional concern. Merely referring to these qualities and promoting the ideas without a detailed knowledge of an appropriate use of them is not sufficient.

Islamic ideas of teaching and learning imply that man should be a learner throughout life. Therefore, his educational tools, such as physical education and sport, if applicable, should not be limited to a particular period of his life. Man should also be a willing and active teacher either in a formal or an informal manner. A physical educator, according to the Islamic line of thinking, should be sincere

in his teaching, should keep abreast of advances in his field, should be considerate and not harsh, cheerful and not angry, should mix criticism with praise, and should use the reward and punishment method of teaching. This method emphasizes rewards and advocates an inclination to forgiveness during punishment. Finally, it was observed that the implications of Islamic belief are in general agreement with the commonly advocated Western views concerning physical education and sport.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

In recommendations for future studies it is suggested that the doctrines and the teachings of other religions be considered for their implications concerning physical education and sport. If one can agree with the view that physical education is education through physical activities, and not education of the physical part alone, original and contemporary religious values can be an important contribution to the development of human qualities through physical education and sport.

It is further recommended that a critical assessment of the foundations of Islamic thought and practice (as well as the implications of these for physical education and sport), as distinct from the purely expository character of the present effort, be undertaken. It is also recommended that an account of interpretations of Islamic doctrine subsequent to the original teachings of the religion be attempted.

It is the belief of the author that the teachings of physical education and sport are very extensive and the field of physical education has an excellent potential for developing many human qualities

that are not formally taught or practiced in other media. Therefore, physical education and sport activities should be approached sympathetically and allowed to foster such qualities. The contributing use of other disciplines should be encouraged, and the responsibility for the values of these teachings in the life of the individual should be reflected in the seriousness of the instructional approach.

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