

# Social Welfare State: The Islamic Paradigm

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## **Abstract:**

This paper discusses the basic theoretical framework of Islamic welfare state in the light of the Qur'an and Sunnah, the two fundamental sources of Islam. It also shows that the Islamic concept of welfare is far more comprehensive than others.

Of all the institutions created by man to organize his collective life, state is the most important and fundamental. Since Islam is complete and integrated way of life, it provides guidelines for the establishment of the state too. The state thus formed has its own characteristics. [1]

One of these important characteristics is that the Islamic state is a welfare state. Islamic state is not only responsible for maintenance of law and order and defense of the realm, but its duty is to ensure the provision of the basic needs of its citizens, be they Muslims or non-Muslims. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ has said that, "Mankind has no right except that it has a house to live in, clothes to hide his nakedness and bread and water". [2]

Thus a roof over the head, clothes to cover the body and food and drink are fundamental human rights, and an Islamic state is responsible for them.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ struggled to spread Islam for 13 years in Makkah. But the unbelievers' opposition did not abate and the Muslims were allowed to migrate first to Ethiopia, and then to Madinah: But the Blessed Prophet ﷺ went on preaching till, apropos to the oath of allegiance (bay'ah) at Aqabah, the Ansar assured the Prophet ﷺ that if he came to Madinah their lives and properties would be at his disposal [3].

This event at 'Aqabah was the prelude to the state later to be formed at Madinah and also a proof of the fact that Hijra was not flight, but a part of a well thought out plan for the establishment of a separate state for the Muslims at Madinah. Thus the Hijra was a watershed in the history of Islam, since, for Muslims, life in its real sense began after it, when the Blessed Prophet ﷺ being the Apostle of Allah acted also as head of a state. This is proved by the following sections of the Mithaq-e-Madinah (the pact of Madinah):

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practice will not only improve his moral behavior and bring better change in his life style but he will also come closer to Allah and shall ultimately begin to worship Him in true spirit.

It is hoped that by acting upon the above-suggested program, one is sure to purify his heart and shall achieve thereby the desired end of comprehending the meaning of inner worship.

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1. *Bukhari, Sahih al-Bukhari*, Dar al-ma 'rifah, Beirut, N.D., vol. i. p. 18f; *'Asqalani, Ibn Hajar, Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bari, Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari*, Dar al-nia 'rifah, Beirut, 1379 A.H., vol. 1, pp. 114-125.
2. *Al-Qur'an*, 107:4
3. *Ibid.*, 33:21
4. *Ibn Hisham Sirat an-Nabi*, ed. Muhammad Muhiy ad-Din 'Abd il-Hainid, Day al-Fikr, Beirut, 140111981, vol. 1, p. 253
5. Sami, 'Atif al-Zayn, *As-Suflyafi nazar al-Islam*, Dar al-Kitab al-Misri, Cairo, 3d ed., 140511985, p. 17.
6. *Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, Al-Isti 'abfi ma 'rifat al-Ashab*, ed. 'Ali Muhammad al-Bajawi, Dar al-Jil, Beirut, 141211992, vol. Iv, p. 1771
7. *Ibid.*, vol. Iii, p. 1140
8. *Ibn Ifishani, op.cit.*, vol. li, p. 234.; *Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, op.cit.*, vol. Iii, p.940.
9. *Bukhari,op.cit.*, vol.I.p.19.
10. *Al-Qur'an*, 867:14
11. *Abid*,91:9.
12. *Ibid*,12:53.
13. *Ibid*,75:2.
14. *Ibid*,89:27.
15. *Ibid.*,29:45.
16. *Ibid*,13:28.
17. *Ibid.*,3:191.

benefits also is required as partial fulfillment of the suggested program of purification of heart.

**(d) Reading few complete Surat weekly.**

The selection of the particular *Surat* can be made by the reader himself. However, the *Surat al-Mulk* or *Surat al-Kahf*, has been recommended due to their *fad'il*.

**(c) Rehearsing prescribed formulae's of 'Dhikr':**

The importance of remembrance of Allah has already been dealt with in great detail. Following are given some easy formulas to be rehearsed according to one's capabilities. One can start with reciting the shortest '*dhikr*' of rehearsing the word "Allah", or pronouncing the formula "*Subhan Allah, Al-Hamdu Lillah, La Ilaha Illallah, wa Allahu Akbar*", at the end of each prayer. Then, according to availability of time at his disposal, he may add few more formulae's with the passage of time. The only (apparently difficult) condition for rehearsing the formulae's of *dhikr* is the regularity and punctuality. Few recommended formulae's, selected from the Prophet's traditions, are as follows:

1. "*Qul Huwallahu Ahad*" to be recited three times daily
2. "*La liaha lgiallah*" to be rehearsed three times daily
3. "*La Ilaha Illallah, Wahdahu La Sharika Lahu, Lahul Mulku wa Lahulhamdu, wa Huwa 'Ala Kulli Shay' in Qadir*" to be recited 100 times daily.
4. "*Subhan Allah wa Bi Hamdihi*" to be rehearsed 1 00 times daily.
5. "*Astaghfirullahal 'Azim* to be rehearsed 100 times daily.

**(f) Listening to religious talks and attending *Majalis adh-Dhikr*:**

To attend religious lectures on *Tafsir* (explanation of *Qur'anic* verses) and *Hadith*, arranged in mosques, religious institutions or private houses also help spiritual development of man. *Sin-ilarly*, the participation in the gatherings of remembrance of Allah (*majalis adh-dhikr*) weekly, fortnightly, monthly or even occasionally, provide good opportunity for spiritual development and purification of heart.

**(g) *Muhasabah* (Self accountability):**

Among the methods of experiencing spirituality in worship the *muhasabah* ranks the best. It is done by critically examining and evaluating one's own actions before going to bed at night and deciding by himself whether they conformed to the injunctions of the *Quran* and *Sunnah*. The critical evaluation of the day's work will show if his worships lacked spirituality. Daily observance of this

etc. This *dhikr* has different forms like *dhikr jali* or *dhikr zahir* (manifest remembrance of Allah), *dhikr khafi* or *dhikr batin* (hidden contemplation), *dhikr al-lisan* (invocation of the tongue) and *dhikr al-qalb* (invocation of heart), and so on. As *dhikr* constitutes the very essence of spirituality, the very first step is to start with the formula of *dhikr* prescribed by individual spiritual guide of a given *sufi* order. Skipping over the detailed prescriptions of *dhikr* suggested by the *Pir*, *Murshid*, or *Shaykh* to their *disciples* at different stages of their spiritual training, suggested below is a workable guideline for remembrance of Allah for those members of the Muslim community who are not receiving spiritual training under *Sufis* belonging to any *Sufi* order (*tariqah*).

**(a) Sincere urge to purify heart:**

Since the success of man both in this world and in the world hereafter depends on the purification of heart, the Muslim performer would like to seek the methods of its achievement. This sincere desire is the prerequisite condition for his spiritual development. If this urge is aroused in his heart he is sure to find means to achieve his goal.

**(b) Punctuality in obligatory prayers:**

Although five times prayer are obligatory on each adult Muslim, male and female, yet it is observed that there are lapses in the fulfillment of this duty. As a part of suggested program of purification of heart to achieve the desired end of experiencing spirituality in worship, the Muslims have to make themselves punctual in offering their prayers regularly, preferably in congregation. For those who had been hitherto neglecting all the five prayers it is suggested that they start with observing at least one or two times prayers regularly in the beginning, which by regular observance shall definitely become five times daily prayers.

In addition to these, the seeker of purification of heart, must attend to weekly Friday prayer regularly. The observance of punctuality in this prayer is comparatively easier.

**(c) Reading of a portion of the *Qur'an* daily:**

One should make it his habit to read at least a quarter of one *hizb* (approximately 25 *ayat*) from the *Qur'an* every day

This will take five to ten minutes only. The *Qur'an*, in its own words, is a 'cure for all human beings' (17:82), meaning a remedy for all the mental worries and anxieties faced by modern generation. Thus by spending few minutes out of 24 hours a day one definitely gets contentment of heart. The recitation of the *Qur'an* whence accrue other

rituals of prayer, fasting, alms giving and the pilgrimage aim at spiritual exaltation of Muslims.

The five daily prayers enjoined on each adult Muslim enables man to realise the Divine that is within him. It is said to be a spiritual diet. Although the desired result may not be visible in the beginning, yet by constantly trying to feel the presence of Allah before him, he eventually comes closer to Allah and achieves thereby spiritual satisfaction.

The other important pillar of Islam in which a Muslim gets best spiritual training is the fasting (*sawm*). Abstaining himself from eating, drinking and sex for limited number of hours during the whole month of Ramadan provides the practical training for his moral elevation. This one month spiritual training course becomes intensive and more fruitful if one prefers to observe the voluntary ten days worship of *I'tkaf*. By temporarily severing family contacts and confining himself in the boundary of mosque he comes closer to God and feels the pleasure of inner worship.

The institution of Hajj is a much higher spiritual experience. The pilgrims clad in same coarse cloth, pronouncing the same formulas of worship, moving together to the same destination, assembling at the same spot, the 'Arafat, and performing the same rites at Mina and at *Safa* and *Marwah* in the house of God, they find themselves the humble servants of Allah. The real significance of this worship is the realization of complete unity of Allah the ultimate aim of mystic life.

It should be remembered that although Islam does not believe in absolute asceticism since 'there is no monasticism in Islam', yet it lays great emphasis on spiritual development of man. In its four basic institutions of *salat*, *sawm*, *zakat* and hajj, it introduces a workable ascetic formula - an asceticism blended with secular side of his life.

Despite the fact that all the pillars of Islam guarantee the contentment of heart and purification of soul the desired result is not seen in the lives of Muslims in the present times. This is due to forgetfulness of the inner meaning of worships. Baffled with the glamour of physical material comforts the modern Muslim has paid attention to his 'body' alone. He has completely forgotten that he has also an inner self - the soul. Similarly, he has forgotten that all the rituals have two sides, one exoteric and the other esoteric. Unless he attends to the esoteric or spiritual side of these worships, he cannot see the professed results. No wonder, therefore, that despite carrying out the obligatory duties of praying, fasting, paying alms and performing pilgrimage, the modern Muslim finds no spiritual satisfaction.

According to sufs, this spirituality can be obtained through *dhikr* which means rehearsing the names of Allah, or pronouncing short formulae like '*Subhan Allah*', '*Al-Hamdu Li-Allah*', '*Allahu Akbar*', '*La Ilaha illa Allah*', '*ya Hayyu*', '*Ya Qayyumu*', '*Ya Rahmanu*', '*Ya Rahimu*'

The Qur'an makes mention of three types of souls, corresponding to three stages of man's spiritual development - from physical to moral, and then to spiritual. The first is described as '*an-Nafs al-Amniarah*'<sup>12</sup> which means the uncontrollable soul or the soul prone to evil and lust inciting man to evil doing. It is the physical condition of man. The second kind is mentioned as '*an-Nafs al-Lawwamah*'<sup>13</sup> or self-accusing soul. It is the conscience of man. It is the stage when the man, influenced by ethical and moral teachings, restrains himself from being the slave of his passion. This is the second stage of his spiritual development. It is a development from his physical nature to moral nature motivated by the voice of his conscience. The highest type of soul is the "*nafs mutima innah*"<sup>14</sup> or the 'soul at rest'.

The second type of soul (*an-nafs al-lawwamah*) does not successfully control man's animal passion (*an-nafs al-ammarah*) and he finds himself weak in controlling the carnal and sensuous desires. Its infirmity resembles the physical weakness of a child who does not want to fall but whose infirm legs are unable to support him. But through spiritual training, this second soul is purified and becomes capable of attaining the final stage of its development when it is called the "soul at rest" (*an-nafs al-mutma'innah*). It is at this stage that man gets contentment of heart. It is for attainment of this stage that Sufis have prescribed stage-wise training programmes for their disciples. Beginning from rehearsing *al-hizb* (chanting of certain litanies at no fixed time) and *al-wird* (chanting these litanies at fixed times of day and night), the disciple is asked to repeat certain names of Allah, or phrases of the *Qur'an*, in his *dhikr* (invocation). Then he enters the stage of *muraqabah* - the lower spiritual development of his heart expressed in 'hadith Jibril' by the words '*fay innahu yaraka*' (He surely seeth thee). If he continually practices the *muraqabah*, he ultimately reaches the stage of *mushahahadah*, which is the culminating point of spiritual exercises. This is the stage expressed in *hadith Jibril* as "*kaannaka tarahu* (as if thou seeth Him).

Having known the importance of purification of heart, exhorted both in the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*, and fully *realising* its dire need in this materialistic world the modern man wants to know the ways and means to accomplish this end, to which we now turn. Remembrance of Allah (*Dhikr*).

The word 'dhikr' has been used in the *Qur'an* in different senses. Apart from its general connotation of remembering Allah at all times, as expressed in the words 'standing, sitting and reclining' (3:191), it also refers to specific rite of prayer (*salat*). Thus in the verse, "When the call is proclaimed to prayer on Friday hasten to the remembrance of Allah (*dhikr Allah*) (62:9), the words '*dhikr Allah*' indicates the congregational *Juma* prayer. But the main purpose of all forms of *dhikr* is one and the same i.e. purification of heart and spiritual development of man. In fact all the four

spent most of his time in the Prophet's mosque along with other members of *Ashab as-Suffah*, being fed by the Prophet ﷺ and other companions, had been appointed the governor of Bahrain during the reign of caliph 'Umar<sup>6</sup>. Similarly, another member of the fraternity of *Suffah*, 'Ammar bin Yasir, was appointed governor of *Kufah* by the same caliph.<sup>7</sup> The Prophet ﷺ himself used to appoint some of these 'people of the bench' as his deputy in his absence from Medina. Thus he had appointed 'Abd Allah bin Abd al-Asad al-Makhzuni as his deputy in Medina when he himself led an expedition to Al-Ushayra.<sup>8</sup> Looking at the lives of the 'people of the bench' who were given some political assignments as well, one can easily notice the marked difference between the lives of this group of people and the lives of Sufis who were solely devoted to spirituality. But despite this dissimilarity the common factor between the two was the spiritual evolution though the 'people of the bench' were more practical. They had before them the model behavior of the Prophet ﷺ, who on the one hand worshipped Allah in true sense of *Ihsan* and was the first *Sufi*, on the other hand he was deeply involved in the affairs of the state, carrying out the duties of the head of state, commander of the army, a judge, head of the family, and social reformer. In other words in spite of being engaged in day to day worldly problems, he was at the same time devoted to remembrance of Allah in the true sense of '*Ihsan*'. The same behavior of the Prophet ﷺ was emulated by the companions especially the *Ashab as-Suffah*. It shows that to comprehend the meaning of spirituality one doesn't have to look for a model other than that of the Prophet ﷺ and the early companions. The companions (*Sahabah*), especially *Abu Bakr*, 'Ali, *Abu Dhar al-Ghifari*, *Hudhayfah*, *Uways al-Qarani*, and *Suhayb ar-Rumi* belonged to the category of those who excelled in spiritual exaltation. After the companions, came such personalities as *al-Hasan al-Basri*, *Malik bin Dinar*, *Fadl ar-Raqqash*, *Rabah bin 'Amr*, female saint *Rabi' ah al-'Adawiyyah*, and *Rabi' bin Khaytham* etc., known as *Nussak*, *Zuhhad*, and *Bakka'un*. The pious lives of the above companions and successors and others mentioned in the biographical works of saintly personalities provide the best guide for comprehending the meaning of spirituality in worship.

The first step to understand the meaning of inner worship is to purify the heart - the controller of mind and source of all actions. The Prophet ﷺ refers to this purification when he says: "Indeed in the body there is a piece of flesh, when it is reformed (purified) the whole body gets purified; if it remains corrupted the whole body becomes putrid; that (piece of flesh) is heart' (*qalb*).<sup>9</sup> The *Qur'an* also exhorts the purification of heart when it says: "Successful is the man who purifies himself" ( and "Surely, the successful is the one who purified it (soul)",

majority of them cannot be considered as true spiritual leaders. Thus in the absence of genuine spiritual guides the meaning of spirituality has to be understood directly from the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*. In fact the best teacher of spirituality is the Prophet ﷺ himself. "You have the 'good model' (*Uswah hasanah*) in the Messenger of Allah" (3) says the *Qur'an*. His conduct being the noble paradigm for all the believers one should find in his practical life the exposition of spirituality in worship.

Without going into details of Prophet's *Sunnah* with regard to every Islamic rite let us take up just one of them, the fasting (*sawm*) and contemplation of Allah during the month of Ramadan. Even before his apostleship, the Prophet ﷺ used to spend few days and nights in seclusion, called '*tahannuth*' in a cave during the month of *Ramazan* <sup>(4)</sup>. This retreat was meant for contemplation and meditation. After being chosen as the messenger of Allah, he continued his spiritual practice in the mosque in the state of *I'tikaf*. He used to spend the last ten days of the month of Ramadan with complete devotion. This number was increased from ten to twenty during the last Ramadan of his life.

The first generation of Muslims, the companions (*sahabah*), emulated the Prophet's *sunnah* in all forms of worship in its real sense. The most significant group of the companions who manifested the spirituality in their worship were the 'people of the bench' (*Ashab as-Suffah*), who had devoted their lives for emulation of Prophet's *Sunnah*. They are the real spiritual leaders. In view of the fact that both the Sufis and the *Ashab as-suffah* devoted themselves to contemplation and aimed at purification of heart to come closer to Allah, the Sufis have traced the origin the word '*Sufi*' from '*Suffah*'. But this theory is untenable firstly on philological ground for to be derived from '*Suffah*' the word should have been '*Suffi*' not '*Sufi*' <sup>(5)</sup>. Secondly, the institutionalized Sufism with well-defined spiritual practices was not to be seen among the spiritual leaders belonging to '*Suffah*'. Similarly, the *Tariqah*, leaving the former for ordinary general Muslims and reserving the latter for them as was done by the Sufis. Lastly, there is marked difference between the two with regard to their attitudes towards practical life. While the Sufis, believing in the theory of renunciation, led an ascetic life, the *Ashab as-Suffah* led a normal life alongside their contemplative spiritual worship. Although in the beginning, when these immigrants of *Makkah* had no means of livelihood and had to depend on well of families for their food, in later years they began to earn their own living and became part and parcel of the nascent Islamic society. Not only this., many of them held important positions in the government. To take an example, the famous Abu *Hurayrah*, the narrator of the largest number of *Ahadith*, and the one who



## Spirituality of worship as manifested in the lives of early Muslims - its need and practicability in modern times

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Spirituality is generally considered as mystical experience whereby *Sufis* endeavour to comprehend the reality of Allah Almighty. This knowledge of Allah acquired by spiritual practices is known, in the language of *Sufis*, as *ma'rifah* but this is only restricted meaning of spirituality. The real meaning of spirituality has been well explained by the Prophet ﷺ, peace be upon him, in the well-known "*Hadith Jibril*". In this *hadith*, the Prophet ﷺ is reported to have explained the meaning of "*Iman*", "*Islam*" and "*Ihsan*" in the presence of Gabriel who had come in the guise of a human being and had asked the Prophet ﷺ to explain the above terms. Hearing the answer from the Prophet ﷺ the angel confirmed that the explanation advanced by the Prophet ﷺ was correct. While explaining the term '*Ihsan*', the Prophet ﷺ said that *Ihsan* is to worship Allah as if thou *seest* Him (*kaannaka tarahu*) for if thou *seest* Him not, He nevertheless *seest* thee (*fa innahu yaraka*) <sup>(1)</sup>. According to this authentic *hadith*, spirituality is nothing more than the inner worship or in other words it is the 'essence' of worship. As explained by the Prophet ﷺ the highest form of worship, termed as "*Ihsan*", is to be absorbed in the remembrance of Allah with such devotion that one could feel the presence of Allah before him but if he cannot reach that level of concentration he must at least have faith that he is being watched by Allah. Short of this feeling his worship will be bereft of spirituality. It is corroborated by the *Qur'anic* verse saying: "Woe to those who pray but are unmindful of their prayer" <sup>(2)</sup>.

It is commonly believed that spirituality of worship can only be achieved by undergoing spiritual training with some *sufi*, called *Pir*, *Shaykh* or *Murshid*, belonging to one or the other *Sufi* orders (*tariqah*). This erroneous belief has discouraged the general members of the Muslim community to strive by themselves for the attainment of spirituality in their worship. No doubt these *sufi* orders and the *sufis* have played a significant role in propagating Islam in different regions of the world like Africa, India and South East Asia in the past but this contribution was made by early devotees of Islam after whom are named the famous *sufi* orders. As regards later *sufis*, especially those advocating anti-Islamic theories of '*hulul*' and the so called *Sufis* of modern times,

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21. Al-I'ilan, p. 173.
22. Al-Kamil, 1:10, al-I'ilan, p. 174.
23. Al-I'ilan, p. 174.
24. Al-Kamil, 1:10, al-I'ilan, p. 174.
25. Al-I'ilan, p. 172.
26. Al-Taratib, 1:187.
27. Al-I'ilan, p. 183.
28. Al-Suyuti, Ta'rikh al-Khulafa, Karachi, 1973, p. 103.
29. Al-I'ilan, p. 172. This was suggested on the ground that after the accomplishment of the Hijra, the first month, in which fighting is prohibited, to come was the month of Rajab.
30. Al-I'ilan, p. 172. This seems to be suggested on the holiness of the month of Ramadan.
31. Al-I'ilan, p. 171.
32. Ibid. The various suggestions regarding the adoption of the first month of the Hijra calendar at this stage seems to be suggestive to that there was no fixed practice about it. Had it been so that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had commanded to use the month of Rabi'al-Awwal as the starting month of the Hijra calendar, the matter could not have been discussed afresh. Hence the various views were expressed.
33. Shibli Nau'mani, Sirat al-Nabi, Karachi, 1975, 6:
34. The final pledge of 'Aqba took place in 622 A.D. on the occasion of Hajj.
35. Hadith Marfu' is that kind of hadith isnad of which goes back to the Prophet, though it might be broken somewhere.
36. Al-I'ilan, p. 171.
37. Ibid.
38. Al-Taratib, 1:181.
39. Ibid.
40. On 29 occasions.
41. Sura xxxvi (ya-sin) 38-39.
42. Sura x (yunus), 5.
43. Sura 11 (Baqara) 189.
44. Ibn Kathir, Tafsir, Beirut, 1980, 3:458.
45. عليكم بسنتي وسنة خلفاء الراشدين المهديين

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2. Al-Taratib, 1: 181.
3. Al-Sakhawi, Muhammad b. 'Abd-al-Rahman, al-I'lan bi al-Taubikh.  
(- al- I'lan) Tr. S.M. Yusuf, Lahore, 1976, P. 176; Shorter E.I., e.v. Hidjra, South Asian Publishers, Karachi, 1981, p. 139.
4. Ibid.
5. Diyarbakri, Husain b. Muhammad, Ta'rikh al-Khamis, Cairo, 1:38.  
ان قرض رمضان كان بعد ما موقت القبلة في شعبان بشهر على ثمانية عشر شهرا سرية عبدالله بن انيس  
See also al-Maghazi, by al-Waqidi, e.v.
6. For details see al-Kamil fi al-Ta'rikh (=al-Kamil) Beirut, 1385/1965. 1:11-12.7 Ka'b b. Lunaif is the ancestor of Banu Hashim-Lowaiy-Murra-Kilab-Qusaaiy—Abd Manaf-Hashim-Abd al-Muttalib—Abd-Allah-Muhammad.
7. Al-Kamil, 1:11. The incidence is said to have taken place in the year of the birth of Prophet (570 or 571).
8. The Days of al-Fijar (Transgression) so called because they fell in the holy months during which fighting is prohibited, This was fought between the Qurashit and their allies Kinana on one side and the Hawazin on the other, when the Prophet was a youth, about A.D. 580-590. T.P. Huges, Dictionary of Islam, Lahore, p. 128.
9. Al-I ilan, P .171.
10. See above 5.
11. Al-Kamil, 1:10, al-I'lan, p. 171
12. Al-K amil, 1:10 Umar on receiving Abu Musa's letter called a meeting Al- I'lan, p. 171
13. Al- Kamil, 1:11; al-I'lan, p. 171
14. Al-I'lan, p. 172
15. Al-I'lan, p.173 al-Kamil, 1:10.
16. For datails see Shibli Naumani, al-Faruq, Karachi, 1958; Shorter E-I, e.v. Hidjra, South Asian publisher, Karachi, 1981, P. 139.
17. Shibli Nau mani al- Farup, p. 458.
18. So called after one of the persian kings, d. 272 A.D., al mu'jam al-wasit. ed: by Dr.Ibrahim Anis et el, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed: 2:983
19. Al-Kamil, 1:10, al-I'lan, p. 173.
20. Al-Kamil, 1:10, al-I'lan, p. 173. Alexander's time means 332 B.C.

the new moons are signs to mark fixed periods of time (in the affairs of) man and for pilgrimage. As such the decision of the Qur'an that the moon along with serving as the basis for time elements in general, determine the time for Hajj as well, attaches religious significance to the use of the Hijra calendar based on the lunar system.

The west adheres to its hereditary traditions and clings to its characteristics even though he it of trivial and insignificant nature. But our's case has become somewhat different and lamentable. We abandon certain aspects of obligation, which in some cases might be of basic importance. Not only that we do behave so, but the tragedy is that we adopt other's characteristics in place of what we already have, on the pretext that we are culturally advanced and that there is no harm in adopting other' characteristics if it apparently seems to be more convenient than ours. This tendency on our part is lamentable.

Adoption of the Christian Calendar in place of the Hijra calendar by us, the Muslims, is too manifest of which there is no gain say. Is it so that it has not affected us in any way? Many of us will cut a sorry figure when asked to name the current month of the Hijra calendar, what to speak of the date of the month. But they will name the month and even dates of the Christian calendar as a ready reckoner.

As mentioned, throughout the Muslim-world the Hijra calendar was used, which the colonial ruler substituted by the Christian calendar. During the colonial rule, use of the Christian calendar by us, is somewhat understandable. But now when the colonial rule has ended, our clinging to the use of Christian Calendar is surprising enough. Rather it portrays a gloomy picture of us in the sense that we use Christian calendar only for its so called occurrences, but we use it even where its use could have easily been avoided, rather the very nature of the works demands so. An analysis of the situation indicates that it seems to be the result of a pre-planned scheme of the orientalist, who mention our history with reference to the Christian calendar, as much as they can. This method is of expletive nature, because it leads us away from our cultural environment. How far the orientalist have successful in their scheme needs no proof in presence of Muslim scholars who followed the orientalist's footsteps in this respect, without knowing its consequences.

Any persistence in the matter of using the Christian calendar in place of the Hijra calendar which has been one of the Islamic characteristics from the beginning, would tell a lot for us, the sooner we revert to the use of the Hijra calendar, the better for us. It is therefore of utmost necessity to revive the use of the Hijra calendar, regularised by the companion the Prophet ﷺ, upholding the sprit of the Hadith: it is binding upon you to obey me any my rightly guided successors' <sup>(46)</sup>

sun, and the moon, in some places these two words have been mentioned together, while in some places uncombined. Along with describing their position among the created things, the Qur'an mentions its usefulness for the mankind. Among these undoubtedly is what man has evolved from them two systems for recognising time elements in terms of days, months, and years to be known as solar and lunar systems.

If we take into consideration the various related verses of the Qur'an from this point of view, we find the following three verses:

والشمس تجري بمسطقر لها ذلك تقدير العظيم ﴿﴾ والقمر قدرنا منازل حتى عاد كالعرجون القديم ﴿﴾

(And the sun runs his course for a period determined for him: That is the decree for (Him) the Exalted in might the All Knowing. And the moon, we have measured for the Mensions (to Traverse) till she returns like the old (and withered) lower part of a date-stalk).<sup>42</sup>

هو الذى جعل الشمس ضياء والقمر نورا وقدره منازل لتعلموا عدد السنين والحساب ﴿﴾

(It is He who made the sun to be shining glory. And the moon to be a light (of beauty) and measured out stages for her, that ye might know the number of years and the count (of time).<sup>43</sup>

ويستلونك عن الاهلة قل هي مواقيت للناس الحج

(They ask thee concerning the new moons. Say: they are but signs to make fixed periods of time in (the affairs of man and for pilgrimage).<sup>44</sup>

It may be pointed out that in the first two verses where the sun and the moon have been mentioned together, it is the moon for which qualifying words **قدره منازل** in the first verse and ( **قدره منازل** ) in the second verse respectively have been used. By **تقدير منازل** is meant the various stages through which the moon passes i.e. its being lean and of little light in the beginning, then its increase both in body and light, and finally its coming gradually to its former position. Further; after the qualifying words **قدره منازل** relating to the moon in the second verse, we find the sentence **لتعلموا عدد السنين والحساب** that you might know the number of years and the count (of time). This shows that subjecting the moon to under go through various stages is for the purpose of counting number of years and time. Explaining this verse, Ibn Kathir says "that by the sun are recognised days and by the varied conditions of the moon are determined months and years."<sup>45</sup> These two verses, as a matter of fact, indicate that the moon is more important than sun for the determination of time elements.

Now let us take the third verse, the translation of which is that

2. It is the month in which Hajjis (pilgrims) return from Hajj (pilgrimage).
3. The month of Muharram had been in use by the Arabs as the first month of their Calendar.
4. Muharram is one of the four months in which war is prohibited.
5. Among the days of the month of Muharram a day is such a holy one in which Man's repentance ( توبه ) is accepted.
6. There is a hadith Marfu<sup>36</sup> reported by al-Dailami in his book al-Firdous relating to the beginning of the Hijra calendar from the month of Muharram.<sup>37</sup>

In continuation thereof, al-Sakhawi quotes Ibn Hadjar's comments who says that among the reasons advanced in favour for the month of Muharram to be counted as the first month of the Hijra calendar, the reason mentioned at one above seems to be more weighty than the others.<sup>38</sup>

The above discussions clarify two points:

1. That it was 'Umar the first, who got decided the matter relating to the adoption of the month of the month of Muharram as the starting month of the Hijra calendar:
2. That he was not the first who introduced the Hijra calendar as is generally understood by the sentence اول من ارخ بالهجرة النبوية 'Umar is the first who used Tarikh with the Hijra of the Prophet).<sup>39</sup>

The misunderstanding created by the above sentence would have dispelled had it been read in context with al-Sakhawi's statements who following the discussion decidedly says فيكون عمر متبعاً لا مبتكراً<sup>40</sup> 'Umar is the follower of a practice and not an originator).

After this historical decision, the use of the Hijra calendar dating from the month of Muharram, instead of Rabi'al-Awwal, was adopted throughout the Muslim world, and regarded as an Islamic characteristics as that of writing, بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم in the beginning of all correspondence, including personal one.

It needs no proof that from the very beginning man felt the necessity of regulating his activities. For remembering so many event upto serving its purpose, enabling him to correlate the past with the present and to come over the difficulties or to enjoy the occurrences of natural phenomena on regular or irregular basis would have guided man to formulate certain guidelines, for which the sun, by its appearance and disappearance at regular intervals or the moon with its horizontal conditions, served the purpose of evolution of time factors.

However, without entering into its details, our concern is to examine the Qur'an, which has also referred to both the sun and the moon.

The Qur'an has mentioned in various places<sup>41</sup> the words the

by 'Umar the following suggestions were given: -

1. The first view was that Hurmuzan,<sup>19</sup> used by the Persians, (who specify years after their king's ascending the throne) be treated as a model and on the same pattern we could also base our history.<sup>20</sup>
2. The second view was that we should follow the Romans who mention their history from Alexander's time.<sup>21</sup>
3. The third view was that we should start counting the year from the Prophet's year of birth.<sup>22</sup>
4. The fourth view was that it should be from the year in which the Prophet ﷺ proclaimed Prophethood.<sup>23</sup>
5. The fifth view was that it should be from the date of Prophet's death.<sup>24</sup>
6. The sixth view was that it should start from the Hijra of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina.<sup>25</sup>

The first and the second views were rejected; reasons for their being rejected are not far to seek. In order to arrive at a conclusion, the remaining four views were discussed, and after great deliberation the view mentioned at No.6 that the Hijra of the Prophet ﷺ be adopted for the purpose. And it was unanimously agreed upon.<sup>26</sup>

The third and the fourth views were rejected on the ground that there were differences in their actual happenings.<sup>27</sup> The fifth view i.e. the year of Prophet's death should be adopted was also rejected on account of its having an aspect of grief.<sup>28</sup>

After resolving the matter through the consensus that the Hijra should be used for the purpose of reckoning years, yet another issue had to be resolved and that was with regard to the starting month of the Hijra calendar. Should it be the month of Rabi'al-Awwal because of its being the month in which the Hijra of the Prophet ﷺ accomplished<sup>29</sup> or should it be another month. 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Awf is reported to have suggested that the first month of Hijra calendar should be the month of Rajab, because it is one of the four Haram months (i.e. the months in which war is prohibited).<sup>30</sup> Some suggested that the month of Ramadan, be adopted for the purpose.<sup>31</sup> 'Uthman and ali' are reported to have suggested that the first month of the Hijra calendar should be the month of Muharram<sup>32</sup> and this view was agreed upon,<sup>33</sup> though neither the Hijra of the Prophet started nor ended in the month of Muharram.<sup>34</sup>

For the agreement on the adoption of the month of Muharram as the first month of the Hijra calendar instead of the month of Rabi'al-Awwal, many reasons have been advanced, which have been summarised by al-Sakhawi.

1. The pledge of 'Aqaba<sup>35</sup> was finalised in the month of Zu al-Hijja, after which Allah's command for the Prophet's Hijra was received and Muharram was the first month to come after Allah's command.