

The essential guide to society

The Quran leads us to true guidance. It says, "Allah is He besides Whom there is no god, the Ever-living, the Self-subsisting by Whom all subsist; slumber does not overtake Him nor sleep; whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His; who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot comprehend anything out of His knowledge except what He wills. His knowledge encompasses the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of them both tires Him not, and He is the Most High, the Great.

"There is no compulsion in religion; truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error; therefore, whoever disbelieves in the Shaitan and believes in Allah, he indeed has laid hold on the firmest handle, which shall not break off, and Allah is Hearing, Knowing.

"Allah is the guardian of those who believe. He brings them out of the darkness into the light; and (as to) those who disbelieve, their guardians are Shaitans who take them out of the light into the darkness; they are the inmates of the fire, in it they shall abide. (2:255-257)" Now, let us try to visualise the passage in its applied form, so that we may have an idea of the kind of individual, society and the type of state that would emerge when Islam is consciously accepted and practised in letter and spirit.

A. INDIVIDUAL: The Quran says: "Do they seek for other than the Religion of God? While all creatures in the heaven and on earth have, willingly or unwillingly Bowed to His will." (3:83)

It means that submission to God is the only true religion for both man and the universe. All other things on earth and space—water, trees and stars are following the divine command.

The Quran says: "Neither is it allowable for the sun to catch up with the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day. Each swims along in (its own) orbit." (36:40) The same is required by all human beings. A believer with his faith is like a horse with its tether. (*Mishal Al Masabih*, Vol 2/1226). A true Muslim has a highly dis-

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ciplined life. He adheres to the set of dos and don'ts ordained by the Almighty. He exercises full control over his speech and always subordinates his intention and thinking to God's will. He is always God's servant.

B SOCIETY: The foundation of society is based on mutual well-wishing. In *Al-Asr* (Time) the Quran says: Man is in loss, except those who believe and do good works and exhort one another to truth and patience (103:1-3) How must a Muslim live in society? The hadith says, "If anyone sees evil, he must rectify it on his own. If he has no capacity to do so, he should do it with his tongue. If he is unable to discourage, then let him condemn the same in his own heart." (*Bukhari*)

Good will naturally flourish in a society based on these principles. The roots of evil, even

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if not totally eradicated, will dry up because of public discouragement. As the truth is openly propagated and the virtue of patience highly recommended, peace will prevail in society as a whole. This is conducive to healthy growth and development. The rights of individuals will be secured, communal harmony ensured, higher values of brotherhood, cooperation and altruism sincerely observed; and, finally, the projects of common welfare, progress and prosperity will be achieved.

C. STATE: A state is an organised political community under one government. Islam does not prescribe any particular form or structure of the state. Nevertheless, Islamic teachings are so comprehensive that they embrace all essential issues including state and its related national or international problems.

What is an Islamic state? Any state governed by Muslims is not an Islamic state. Apart from its monotheistic doctrinal basis, an Islamic state would practically be identified with the "no-compulsion" principle. For the power gained through compulsion or the power used for compulsion in any manner, particularly in religious matters, is strictly prohibited and condemned in Islam. That is why states governed by Muslim dictators have never been considered ideal by Islamic scholars themselves. However, Islam does not allow its followers to rebel against any established state even though it may not seem to be in accordance with the Islamic ideal. That state should never be resisted by means of a counter compulsion, say revolt, but by means of conviction and negotiation. This ensures stability in law and order, which subsequently promotes Islamic values and prepare a foundation for a true Islamic state. To establish an ideal state is not Islam's main target as wrongly projected by some groups of Muslims. It is something that may ultimately emerge from a society of sincere practising Muslims. It is not predictable. Such a state according to the Quran (24:55), "is a worldly reward Allah grants to His righteous servants when He wills." It is not a goal the community may struggle for.