

O you who believe, respond to the call of Allah and His Messenger when He calls you to that which would give you life..

# Khilafah

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## Pakistan: The next US target



PAKISTAN – THE NEXT US TARGET  
SHARIAH THE GLASS HOUSE ATTACK, WHAT PRICE OIL  
THE SUBLIME VALUES OF THE SHARIAH  
DOES ISLAM OPPRESS THE WOMAN?, DISASTER CAPITALISM

# NEWSBITES



## VALUES CHANGE

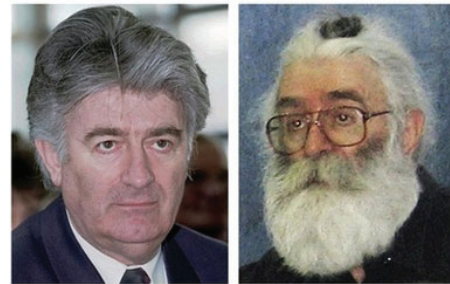
A French court has refused to grant citizenship to a Moroccan Muslim woman on the grounds that her religious beliefs are incompatible with French values. The woman (Faiza M) speaks excellent French and has three children who were born in the country, but it appears the French court has taken exception to her wearing of a burka. In the legal report submitted to the Council of State, she is accused of living an almost reclusive life "in total submission to her male relatives". Faiza first applied for citizenship in 2005, but was refused on the grounds of insufficient assimilation. This new rejection of her appeal establishes a new legal precedent in French law as in previous cases applicants were refused citizenship due to alleged links to extremism.



## WHEN IS A RULER NOT A RULER?

Turkey's highest court has now ruled that the government of Recep Erdogan of the AKP can continue for the time being. A senior prosecutor had charged the AKP with trying to "establish a state system based on religious principles" which is outlawed in Turkey's Kemalist constitution. Since 1962 the court has closed down 24 Political parties, including a forerunner of the AKP, but this was the first time that a current incumbent government was threatened

with banning. The AKP is seen as toothless, in light of the constitution, and has failed to "change the system" from within, failing even to overturn the ban on women wearing headscarfs in universities.



## KARADZIC BROUGHT TO BOOK

Amid massive media coverage throughout Europe former Serbian leader of the Republic of Srpska (the Serbian half of Bosnia) Radovan Karadzic was arrested in Belgrade and taken to the European Court of war crimes in the Hague. While Serbian opinion was decidedly mixed with headlines such as "Radovan Betrayed" and "Treason", there was also quiet acceptance that the turning over as a war criminal the architect of the shelling of Sarajevo, the massacre of Srebrenica and the disgusting policies of "ethnic cleansing" as he termed it, would be necessary for the final acceptance of a reforming Serbia into the European Union.

While no one will be sad to see the back of Karadzic even though his trial will likely descend into farce as Milosevic's had previously, the greater questions lie over who else should have been charged.

Karadzic is charged with genocide, complicity in genocide, extermination a crime against humanity, murder, violation of the customs or laws of war, wilful killing, persecution on political, racial and religious grounds, deportation, inflicting terror on citizens, and the taking of hostages. Muslims of the region continue to ask about the actions of the Dutch UN forces who were complicit in failing to protect the Muslims in the UN "safe haven" of Srebrenica, or the British and European commanders who rigidly enforced an arms embargo upon the

Muslims of the region while knowing full well that the Serbs were well equipped by the Russians. US mediation representative Richard Holbrooke too was quick to distance himself from Karadzic, even managing to deny the allegations of specific deals offered to Karadzic. Quite a feat as Karadzic had not yet at that time accused Holbrooke of offering him deals.



## WHAT PRICE EDUCATION IN THE NEW KOSOVA

Residents of Pristina the capital city of the new US/UN run state of Kosova have been stunned by the decision to tear down one of the oldest and most prestigious High Schools Xhevdet Doda in order to build a Catholic Cathedral. The Cathedral which is currently under construction extends a full block of the busy capital streets and boasts several underground layers, all the more surprising given that Christians make up no more than 1% of the population of the overwhelmingly Muslim Kosova. Muhammad Ali Abu Deena a leading political analyst called it part of the Lebanonisation policy being imposed on Kosova. "No one has seen any benefits from the supposed 22 billion Euro investment in Kosova since the 1999 war, the economy is stagnant, the mines remain closed and unemployment remains at greater than 60% in Europe's poorest economy". Abu Deena cites the high levels of missionary work particularly in rural areas where Muslims are being encouraged to return to supposed "Christian" roots.

Dr Abdul Wahid

# Editorial

## 'British Islam': The UK Government Policy to manufacture a new religion

The British Government has a current policy to manufacture a new religion. They call it 'British Islam'. Former Communities Secretary Ruth Kelly talked about a 'British Version of Islam'. A paper by the Department of Communities and Local Government titled "The Role of Muslim Identity Politics in Radicalisation" mentions how the government would like to use "British Islam as a response to radical Islam". In July 2008 the Foreign Office boasted how it was sending a delegation on a 'tabligh' trip to Egypt to propagate this 'British Islam'.

This project is consistent with international plans to advance a western form of Islam around the Muslim world, as outlined by reports from the RAND Corporation (who call it 'Civil Democratic Islam') the Nixon centre in the USA, and Civitas in the UK. Civitas, in their report 'The West Islam and Islamism' said:

*"It is not enough for the vast majority of decent, peaceful, law-abiding Muslims to renounce terror in principle, including September 11 and similar events. ... If they choose to live in Western liberal democratic societies, they must accept the values of liberal democracy—as Jews, Sikhs, Hindus and others have done for many years."*

Ultimately, this is 'British Islam': The acceptance of the values of liberal democracy. Ironically, the Church of England, which went through its reformation hundreds of years ago is still struggling to unite around the values of liberal democracy.

There have been several policies announced to further this aim. The most recent this July was a new Imam's board and a policy that Madrassahs should teach 'citizenship'. This board of Imams is sponsored by the British from its Preventing Violent Extremism fund but

under the auspices of Oxford and Cambridge Universities. It is said it will pronounce on 'areas such as wearing the hijab and the treatment of wives' and 'rule on interpretation of the Koran'. Doubtless, the government would expect an essential 'Usuli' principle of "British Islamic jurisprudence" to be consistency with the values of liberal democracy.

The details of the other policy of citizenship classes in Madrassahs are not known. Certainly, local councils are throwing PVE ("Preventing Violent Extremism") money around, presumably in the hope of eventually attaching conditions to the funding. However, it is worth looking at some of the examples of citizenship teaching in schools and for immigrants looking to remain in the UK. This is one example from a school curriculum.

### What are rights and responsibilities?

Rights and ages:

- Pubs can apply for a license to enable under 14 year olds to be accompanied by an adult to a bar. At 14 you can legally enter into a bar for soft drinks.
- At 16 or over you can buy beer, cider, or sherry to drink with a meal in the dining or restaurant area of a pub.
- A girl must be 16 before she can legally have sex with a boy
- It is illegal for two people of the same sex to have sex together if either is under 16
- Tobacco should not be sold to anyone who appears to be under 16 years of age
- At 18 you can buy alcohol in a bar or a licensed shop

In December 2004, when citizenship was launched for immigrants in the 'life in the UK handbook' they mentioned that the test questions would include 'vital citizenship issues' such as:

1. What is a round in a pub?
2. What is Guy Fawkes Day?
3. What is Remembrance Day?
4. How does Father Christmas dress?
5. Do you sign a Valentine's Day card?

## 6. Where is the centre of politics?

We wait to see what type of citizenship they plan for Madrassahs. They tried one pilot project in Bradford that was roundly rejected by the local community. 90% of this curriculum seemed reasonable, but it was punctuated by examples that talked about Muslims buying fertiliser to make bombs! Far more likely to reinforce a feeling of suspicion and a negative self image than to build a confident and positive mindset amongst Muslim children.

The British government's interference in matters of Islam is not new. Under their colonial occupation of India they sponsored certain religious brands to maintain hegemonic control and pacific resistance - the most famous being Ghulam Mirza Ahmed of Qadiyaan - who would pronounce in the name of his religion that resistance to the occupier was forbidden. The government would like nothing more than to have credible figures pronounce that opposition to their foreign policy is tantamount to heretical extremism. Their problem hitherto has been to find credible figures to do their work. Those who do follow the line of the evolving established British Islamic clergy have little or no credibility, and so they are little closer in finding an Arch-Mufti of Canterbury.

Such projects of social and religious engineering never ultimately succeed. The texts of Islam are not open to the distortion that occurred in previous religions that were reformed, and it is ironic that politicians in Britain of all places are so convinced of their reformation policies. The present bitter struggle between liberal and traditional Anglicans that threatens to divide the Church of England illustrates that the reformation of the Christian church has been unable to fully persuade its adherents despite centuries of effort. The experiments in Islamic reformation stand precious little chance of success.

However, they all have the potential for creating resentment amongst the Muslim community, heightening alienation as Muslims uniquely are singled out for state interference and reinforce the colonial image of a state that treats certain communities as lesser subjects and not as citizens.

Sajjad Khan

# Pakistan

## - the next US target



Bill Kristol Fox Television commentator and arch neoconservative revealed recently what many had long suspected was US thinking about the current international situation. Kristol recounts that in a 90-minute, mostly off-the-record meeting with a small group of journalists in early July, President Bush "conveyed the following impression, that he thought the next president's biggest challenge would not be Iraq, which he thinks he'll leave in pretty good shape, and would not be Afghanistan, which is manageable by itself. ... It's Pakistan." We have "a sort of

friendly government that sort of cooperates and sort of doesn't. It's really a complicated and difficult situation." Right on cue, presidential candidate Barack Obama took the baton from Bush in his speech on July 15th in which he argued that more focus and resource were required on both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The Kristol revelation on the surface is staggering yet not a surprise to those who have long suspected that the US presence in Afghanistan constitutes a Trojan horse for a more insidious plan

the US has for Pakistan. Some may find it surprising that the US now believes Pakistan to be more challenging than Iraq where the US has 150,000 troops, has spent almost a trillion dollars and has incurred over 4,000 fatalities. The Neocon vision was that the capture of Iraq, a state that lies at the heart of the Middle East, would allow it to control not just the resources of the region but more importantly the geo politics. Of course the post invasion challenge was severely underestimated and despite some reduction in violence (albeit from a high benchmark), Iraq remains a mess. The US would like Iraq to be stable but not too stable, independent but not too independent, have an effective military but not too effective. John McCain compares the US role in Iraq with that of Korea and Germany and believes the US could be there for a hundred years. To justify a continued presence the US needs to keep Iraq weak and divided. No one can seriously dispute the growth in sectarianism that has been seen since the US occupation. With a self governed Kurdish north, a Shia dominated central government and now US support for the Sunni tribes, Petraeus has presided over a de facto partitioned state.

So with Iraq closer to de facto partition, America can now turn its attention to Pakistan. This change of focus has been sign posted now for at least twelve months. In June 2007 the US published



its National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) with some startling new revelations. Despite citing its numerous successes against Al-Qa'ida since September 2001 including these statements in a declassified document titled "Trends in Global Terrorism: Implications for the

Pakistan was therefore created, any attack on any US target from now on that was traced to the FATA would give the US "cause belli" to undergo a massive retaliatory attack within Pakistan. Indeed Frances Townsend Homeland Security adviser to Bush said

subservient to Pakistan in Washington's thinking. Fourthly the continued barrage of criticism within Capitol Hill, by Afghan officials and western think tanks of Pakistan's failure to stem cross border insurgency prepares the ground for an eventual attack in Pakistan. Indeed eliminating the Pakistan sanctuary bases is one of the RAND Corporation's key recommendations in a recent report entitled "Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan." (funded by the US DOD). The report does not confine criticism to the FATA but states that the insurgency also finds refuge in the North Western Frontier Province (NWFP) as well as the province of Balochistan so extending the area substantially for future retaliation. Lastly according to a New York Times report in June, top Bush administration officials drafted a secret plan in 2007 to make it easier for US Special Operations forces to operate inside Pakistan's tribal areas but that turf battles and the diversion of resources to Iraq held up the effort. However now that forces are being reduced in Iraq, it is inevitable that such programs will be stepped up.

### The US has been itching to get into Pakistan for some time, first using remote controlled Predator aircraft to attack targets within Pakistan almost on a daily basis.

United States" dated April 2006 stated the following "United States - led counterterrorism efforts have seriously damaged the leadership of Al-Qa'ida and disrupted its operations....We assess the global jihadist movement is decentralised, lacks a coherent global strategy, and is becoming more diffuse."

Yet the collective US intelligence community made a volte face fourteen months later when it said the following: "We assess the group (Al Qa'ida) has protected or regenerated key elements of its Homeland attack capability, including: a safe haven in the Pakistan Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), operational lieutenants, and its top leadership."

So in effect what the US intelligence community was saying was that its six year war against Al-Qa'ida had been a failure and that to win the war effectively required action within Pakistan. The pretext for war within

shortly after the NIE was published that the United States would be willing to send troops into Pakistan to root out Al-Qa'ida, noting specifically that "no option is off the table if that is what is required"

The US has been itching to get into Pakistan for some time, first using remote controlled Predator aircraft to attack targets within Pakistan almost on a daily basis. Secondly the US has spent \$10 billion on Pakistan's military since 2001 and more specifically in trying to make Pakistan's Frontier Corps into a fighting unit for the US military. To ensure Washington gets better value for money, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee Senator Joe Biden is seeking to enact legislation in Congress to tie future security aid to performance. Thirdly by promoting General Petraeus from heading up the Iraq campaign to become Central Command (Centcom's) new head, clearly indicates that Iraq has become

So why is Pakistan so important, this was answered quite succinctly by Mitchell Shivers Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asian & Pacific Security Affairs in his testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 25 June 2008 when he said the following:

Firstly, Pakistan is the second most populous Muslim state, the sixth most populous country in the world, and is located at the geopolitical crossroads of South and Central Asia.

Second, Pakistan possesses nuclear weapons and has already fought three conventional wars with another nuclear nation next door, India. Third Pakistan has a large, growing moderate middle class striving for democracy.

Fourth, elements of extremism and terrorism are at work within Pakistan. Fifth, the whole-hearted assistance of



the Pakistani people and their government will help the United States achieve its national security objectives in Afghanistan. Sixth, and most importantly, militants and terrorists within the border region of Pakistan constitutes a direct threat to the United States homeland.

Former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in an article in the Washington Post in March defined US objectives in Pakistan as “control of nuclear weapons, counter-terrorism cooperation and resistance to Islamic radicalism” and believes Pakistan could turn “into the wildcard of international diplomacy.” This was echoed by Turkey’s military chief General Buyukanit who speaking in March at an international conference in Ankara warned that Pakistan’s political troubles could open the way for the Taliban to seize the country and its nuclear weapons.

The US fears Pakistan, as it contains the key mix of Islam, nuclear weapons and people who are impatient for change and who do not trust the Americans. Consistent surveys indicates that the US’s approval ratings are less than 20% in Pakistan and that the people of Pakistan desire for Islamic rule does not equate to a desire for violent extremism. The desire for Islamic governance allied with the ingredients

above clearly illustrate why Pakistan has risen to the top of Washington’s radar screen and why Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen has now made four visits to Pakistan since February.

What about the war in Afghanistan, how does this fit into the plan for Pakistan? Of course Afghanistan has some value to the US but the campaign as Kristol admits will be allowed to continue on the back burner. The US objective for Afghanistan was never to defeat the Taliban or to extend its remit over the whole country. Indeed if it was the objective, the US would have sent more troops. The Soviet Union in comparison had 300,000 troops in the 1980’s and while occupying the cities, could never pacify the countryside. The US and NATO presence at about 65,000 is almost laughable when facing a population of 31 million. The US campaign in Afghanistan is more a forward base combining special forces and CIA operatives backed up with airpower and a modest number of US ground forces. The mission in 2001 was to coordinate the fight with allies within the Northern Alliance and amongst other minorities and disgruntled anti-Taliban elements. Geo strategically Afghanistan has limited value for the US, other than to ensure no one else should control it. This

explains why the priority given to Afghanistan will always be less than Iraq and certainly lower than Pakistan. It also explains why Afghanistan is in the shambles it is.

According to the Afghanistan Human Development Report 2007 Afghanistan remains far behind neighbouring countries with a rank of 174 out of 178 countries on the global HDI (a composite indicator that measures education, longevity, and economic performance). 6.6 million Afghans do not meet their minimum food requirements. 2006 witnessed a significant rise in attacks and a 59% spike in the area under poppy cultivation, making the country a world leader in the production of illegal opium (90% of global production). Low literacy and a lack of access to safe drinking water, food, and sanitation contribute to the still relatively high child mortality rate. With the maternal mortality ratio estimated at 1600 deaths per 100,000 live births, Afghanistan maintains one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world

How should Muslims in the region respond? They need to do at least three things:

1 Pakistan should realise what the US is trying to do. It doesn’t require an international relations genius to conclude that the US is seeking to do to Pakistan what it has done to Iraq, namely decimating its military capability and fracturing the country into separate entities. The army who effectively control Pakistan are not stupid, they understand the political dynamic at place. Four star General Tariq Majeed Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee recently said at an international conference in Singapore that cross-border missile strikes into Pakistan’s tribal belt are killing civilians and contributing to the popular perception that U.S. military operations in the region are “anti-Islam.” They understand that when the US talks about reforming the Frontier Corps, this is about ensuring that they fight more effectively for the US not Pakistan. They

## Indeed the major problems in Afghanistan and Pakistan are not one of economic resources but of political will.

also understand that while the US has a tactical relationship with Pakistan, it seeks a strategic relationship with India even to the extent of offering it unprecedented civil nuclear assistance. The \$10 billion or so that the US has given Pakistan since 2001 means nothing if Pakistan eventually fragments into multiple pieces. With NWFP, Balochistan and Karachi all teetering at the edge, the US has a once in a generation opportunity to turn Pakistan into a balkanised hell hole.

2 The only supply lines into Afghanistan for the US are either through the mountains of Central Asia or through the port of Karachi. Without Pakistan, logistics, the flow of supplies, fuel and other military hardware would soon stop the campaign in Afghanistan. There is no strategic interest for Pakistan to continue to support America's war in Afghanistan. Firstly it allows 65,000 NATO and US troops to permanently occupy a Muslim country creating an anti Pakistani government in Kabul. Secondly instead of having a secure western border, Pakistan has to have 100,000 troops permanently supporting the US effort thus taking valuable resources from its more vulnerable eastern border with India. Lastly Pakistan has to face the blowback, of fighting not just its own citizens in NWFP and FATA, but fellow Muslims across the border.

3 Lastly the people of Pakistan and Afghanistan have to realise that neither brutal dictatorship or secular democracy can succeed in the Muslim world. As has been witnessed since February, Pakistan's political class have no solutions with respect to high fuel costs, high food prices and the deterioration in the financial environment. The Afghan President has also presided over a country where

after nearly 7 years, hunger, corruption, electricity shortages and killing civilians are the watchwords of today's Afghanistan. Only the tried and trusted Islamic system of the Khilafah (Caliphate) can succeed in the Muslim world. A coherent effort at re-establishing the Khilafah is now the urgent requirement and is gaining momentum. According to an opinion poll carried out by the University of Maryland, 74% of Pakistanis support the establishment of a unified Khilafah in the Muslim world, the establishment of such an entity is therefore not a question of if, but when.

Indeed the major problems in Afghanistan and Pakistan are not one of economic resources but of political will. Afghanistan and Pakistan are not 'failing states.' Unfortunately for the people of Afghanistan they've been invaded twice by external powers in the last 25 years and this remains the hub of their problem. For the Pakistani people they have seen over 60 years of political failure with so called "independence" a mere charade.

Yet the world is entering a new paradigm in international relations. No longer will the Fed in Washington be calling the shots. No longer will the Dollar reign supreme. No longer is the US military invincible. What started with self evident truths in Philadelphia over two centuries ago has now morphed into implosion on Wall Street and an economic tsunami across the globe.

Many cite the Khilafah as a utopian dream, yet those in the know are not so sure. A US government intelligence study by the National Intelligence Council in 2004 called "Mapping the Global Future" presented as one future scenario the rise of a new pan-national

Caliphate. Thomas Ricks the Washington Post's senior Pentagon correspondent in his book "Fiasco" says there is precedent for the emergence of a unifying figure in the Muslim world a modern day Saladin someone who can revive the region through combining popular support with huge oil revenues. A real "nightmare scenario" for the western world as Richard Nixon once described it in his book 1999.

So Muslims face a strategic choice either support the US led coalition or politically unify under the banner of Islam. Whereas the former guarantees national oblivion and further balkanisation, the latter should allow the Muslim world to flourish and meet head on the challenges of the 21st century.

Dr Imran Waheed

# Shariah

## The Glass House Attack



It seems that hardly a week goes by without some sort of debate about the Shariah or the discussion of the Shariah in the editorials of leading newspapers – frequently the Shariah is labelled as barbaric.

Following the comments of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, there was a vicious attack on the Shariah by politicians and journalists. Similar propaganda was seen following the detention of British schoolteacher Gillian Gibbons in Sudan and the media

often examines the alleged implementation of Shariah in Nigeria, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and Iran, amongst others.

The attacks on the Shariah became more pronounced since the advent of the "war on terror" – leading politicians of the West like the former British Home Secretary, Charles Clarke, said that the West would not negotiate over the implementation of Shariah law – others have sought to depict it as backward, medieval and oppressive. The leader of

the Conservative Party, David Cameron, even went as far as comparing those Muslims who advocate Shariah to the British National Party.

While attacking the Shariah, many in the West have sought to assert the superiority of its own civilisation. Shortly after 9/11, the Italian PM Berlusconi said, "We must be aware of the superiority of our civilisation, a system that has guaranteed - in contrast with Islamic countries - respect for religious and political rights". At the same time a writer in the International Herald Tribune wrote that, "Islamic society, the West's equal at the time of the European Renaissance, failed to make the transition to a modern society... Islam since 1914 has failed to make a serious intellectual response to the modern West. Culture and intelligence, not power, decide the quality of societies."

Is this superiority warranted? Has the West's success been so huge that it can claim that its values and ideology are a panacea for the masses? While Western scientists have certainly made progress in the field of medicine, science and technology, has the West been able to produce stability, happiness and tranquillity in its societies?

### **The Crime Epidemic**

The well known cases of criminality in the West are undoubtedly a shocking indictment of Western society. However to focus on the likes of Harold Shipman, Josef Fritzl or Fred and Rosemary West would lead to the defence that these were isolated cases of psychopathic individuals who exist in every





civilisation. Although this is debatable, it is better to therefore focus on the wider picture to establish the West's record of nurturing harmony and security in its societies.

The record of Western governments in creating security for their citizens is appalling. Crime continues to spiral out of control and despite a plethora of Government statistics the public is not reassured. While statistics may suggest that knife crime is relatively stable, that is neither the perception or practical experience of millions. While Mark Twain wrote of "lies, damned lies and statistics" he would have written of "lies, damned lies, statistics and Home Office statistics" had he lived in twenty first century Britain. It is well known that many people do not bother to report crime and some incidents of crime are not even properly recorded, even when reported.

Even these unreliable statistics show that one offence involving a knife is committed every 24 minutes of the day - on average, there are 175 robberies at knife-point in England and Wales every day. In the first half of 2008, twenty teenagers have been stabbed to death on the streets of London. On Thursday 10th July four men were stabbed to death in London alone.

The Youth Justice Board says that a third of 11- to 16-year-olds "occasionally" carry a knife. The average age of homicide victims overall has been falling. In May 2008, the Old Bailey heard that 14-year-old Martin Dinnegan had died last June after exchanging "dirty looks" with another group of boys; a victim of what the prosecuting QC called "the growing scourge of urban posturing". Two members of a gang interviewed on Sky News said, "If you kill someone that just makes you bigger or something."

Crime figures show that annually there are over one million thefts of cars or from cars, nearly one million burglaries, and almost three-quarters of a million violent crimes. It is no exaggeration to say that crime has become a normal and expected feature of daily life in Western

societies. Crime is not the preserve of the lower socio-economic classes or particular ethnic minorities but occurs at all levels of capitalist society - the massive financial scandals at Enron and WorldCom were crimes on a much higher level than those committed by petty thieves and shoplifters.

The use of illicit drugs is also out of control. 1 in 10 teenagers smoke cannabis daily and three-quarters of people in the UK say drugs are a problem in their area, according to a BBC survey. The value of the illegal drugs market in the UK is put at £5bn a year, and the cost of drug-related crime in England and Wales is estimated at more than £13bn.

Off the streets, each year there are over 100,000 domestic violence incidents in London alone. 2 women a week are killed in the UK as a result of domestic violence. Alarming some surveys have shown that as many as 1 in 5 young men in the UK believe that abuse or violence

#### What can be done?

It would seem that the crime epidemic cannot be stemmed - superficial and patchwork solutions are proposed by politicians including self-defence classes, neighbourhood watch projects, improved street lighting and the electronic tagging of offenders. In response to the latest wave of stabbings, the British Home Secretary, Jacqui Smith, outlined her plans to tackle the problem, including the suggestion that offenders could visit stabbing victims in hospital as part of their rehabilitation. The Government's crime tsar, Louise Casey, suggested that people undertaking community sentences should be marked out by wearing high visibility bibs. The solutions tend to swing like a pendulum between harsher punishments and community rehabilitation - however whichever way the pendulum swings, the crime epidemic continues unabated.

The predominance of man-made systems throughout the world has led to the belief by some that the laws need to be

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towards women is acceptable (Zero Tolerance Charitable Trust, 1998). Every minute of every day in the UK, police receive a call from the public for help at the scene of domestic violence - however only about 35 per cent of violence is reported. 1 in 20 women has been raped in the UK and over the last few years there has been a reported 82 % increase in the amount of rape in the UK, although the Home Office says this is due to a new way of collecting statistics. Alarming, the conviction rate for rape is only 7 %.

constantly changing - this is a fallacy and is nothing more than an illustration of the weakness of man-made systems and ideologies. After shooting massacres like those at Dunblane, Columbine High School or Virginia Tech, there are always calls for the tightening of gun controls or even the banning of firearms. Similarly, after the recent spate of knife killings in London, the UK government announced £3 million of funding for an "anti-knife campaign". Responding to the recent series of knife attacks, one medical expert, Dr. Mike Beckett, went as

far as to argue that it is time to remove sharp knives from kitchens altogether. He says there is no need for the pointed tips that make knives fatal. "What people want in a kitchen knife is the edge," he told the BBC. "The point on the end of the knife actually serves little culinary purpose, but it is the point that kills people." However, the banning of knives or other weapons does nothing to address the underlying values that have led to an epidemic of crime. In reality there are many objects which can be used to kill - guns and knives are common examples but cricket bats, baseball bats, cars, metal bars, chemical gases and even planks of wood can be used to kill.

It also appears that many of the solutions proposed seem almost absurd. The government minister, Hazel Blears, has said in the past that alcohol accounts for 44 per cent of violent crime. In order to tackle this, what did the government propose? 24 hour opening for pubs and clubs. Similarly, the issue of problem gambling was identified - the solution included the relaxation of gambling laws and the opening of super casinos. This was despite a confidential police report that noted that these changes would increase antisocial behaviour and divert police resources, increase organised crime and money laundering and increase access to gambling for children and vulnerable groups. While the government bans the so-called 'glorification of terrorism' to silence critics of its colonialist foreign policy, it does nothing about the glorification of knives, guns, drugs and sexual violence by the entertainment industry.

The entrepreneurial spirit has led many to take advantage of the crime wave that characterises capitalist nations; sales of security systems and CCTV have never been better, insurance companies have never made more money and martial arts clubs are overflowing with new recruits. Almost every house in the country is equipped with sophisticated door viewers, latches, infra-red halogen lights, deadlocks, and the like to keep unwanted visitors at bay. Some have

suggested better street lighting, kung fu classes for women and building inner cities with fewer places to hide for burglars.

There are differing opinions about the balance between punishment and rehabilitation. Some believe that burglars should do community service, whereas others argue that they ought to do time behind bars. However there is a consensus that nothing seems to work. Jails are 20 per cent overcrowded, with some prisons accommodating almost double the amount of inmates they were built for. In accordance with the entrepreneurial sentiments of capitalism most thieves go to jail not to be reformed, but rather to emerge with better ways of avoiding being caught, and much bigger schemes than mugging the local vicar. There seems to be no answer - if you jail them they end up staying in a school for criminals and become submerged in a life of crime - if they are not jailed, then there is no deterrent against committing crime.

#### **Is there any real debate about the causes of these problems?**

What is it that has led crime to spiral out of control? Britain, like other Capitalist nations, has been unable to deal with these problems in an effective manner. The solutions put forward fail to realise that the real cause of the crime epidemic is the underlying values that permeate throughout every facet of Western society - capitalism, individualism, materialism, personal freedom.

Western liberal values have a close association with the widespread mentality of instant sensual gratification, encapsulated by the famous Latin phrase, 'Carpe Diem', which roughly translates to "enjoy the present day". As such, there is often little need to worry about the future or the consequences of one's actions. Instant sensual gratification is what is required, and as much of it as possible. While one individual's quest for sensual gratification may be realised through drugs and binge drinking, some try to find solace in fast cars and the acquisition of vast amounts of material

wealth while others engage in 'retail therapy', building up large debts in the process.

The notion of being accountable only to oneself and that material wealth and sensual pleasure are the markers of success in life, make up the very fabric of the society we live in. Life is short - you live and then you die - so seek pleasure and avoid pain - you are free to do what you want. At the extreme end, it is this pursuit of pleasure, benefit and joy that drove the likes of Harold Shipman and Fred and Rosemary West to their actions.

It is this mentality that has turned Capitalist nations into jungles of wild animals in which the strong devour the weak and man degenerates to the level of the animal as a result of the unleashing his instincts and needs. Consequently rehabilitation is not just required of the individual but rehabilitation is required of all the values that are present within Capitalist societies. The root problem therefore is not drugs, illiteracy, social deprivation, poverty, crime or a decline in moral values - the real problem are these values. The drug causing the greatest addiction in the West is not heroin or even crack cocaine, but rather the slogan of freedom. It is a slogan behind which politicians hide whilst subjugating a society to their whims and desires.

#### **Those who live in glass houses, shouldn't throw stones**

Muslims, whether in the West or the Islamic world, need to call into question the record of the West rather than developing an inferiority complex in the face of the barrage of propaganda that is spun about the Shariah.

The failure of the capitalist ideology to create harmony, tranquillity and security in Western societies cannot be in doubt. Despite this poor record, some Western politicians, journalists and thinkers are quick to criticise the Islamic Shariah, labelling it backward, regressive and unjust. This brings to mind Chaucer's famous proverb - "Those who live in glass houses, shouldn't throw stones".

Jilani Ghulam

# What Price Oil?



RONALD REAGAN once described inflation as being "as violent as a mugger, as frightening as an armed robber and as deadly as a hit-man". With the price of oil doubling in the last year and no end to commodity price increases, including the dramatic escalation of food prices, it seems Reagan's nightmare is coming back into reality.

Particular attention is on the rise and rise of world oil prices with Western leaders meeting OPEC producers, to demand action to halt the march in the price of oil. Gordon Brown made his views clear before meeting OPEC at Google's third Zeitgeist conference on Monday 19th May, when he said: "It is ... a scandal that 40% of the oil is controlled by Opec, that their decisions can restrict the supply of oil to the rest of the world, and that at a time when oil is desperately needed, and supply needs to expand, that Opec can withhold supply from the market."

Brown further clashed at the OPEC meeting on Sunday 22nd June, insisting that surging demand from the

developing world rather than speculative pressures was driving up oil prices and creating an oil crisis to match those of the 1970s. What he meant in plain terms is that demand from China, Russia and India are driving oil prices and OPEC needs to produce more.

For a man of Gordon's Brown's acumen, these statements are at best bizarre and at worst reflect his colonial mindset. Firstly, how can demand and supply explain what has happened over the last 12 months, when oil prices were only \$70 a barrel in August 2007; they have effectively doubled when there has been no dramatic change in demand? This view doesn't explain the underlying factors such as:

#### **Pegging of Oil to Dollars**

Most oil sales throughout the world are denominated in United States dollars (USD). Because most countries rely on oil imports, they are forced to maintain large stockpiles of dollars in order to continue imports. This causes demand for US dollars to remain high, regardless of economic conditions in America. As a

result the American government can run higher budget deficits at a more sustainable level than can most other countries. It also means that the price of oil is more stable in the U.S. than anywhere else, since importers do not need to worry about exchange rate fluctuations.

However, the recent rise in oil prices is at least partially tied to the fall of the US dollar relative to most currencies. The dollar has fallen as a result (amongst many other things) of the Federal Reserve's response in printing more dollars to try to offset the credit crunch, as well as the lowering of interest rates to just 1%. Since oil is priced in dollars, sellers have increased prices to compensate for their "real" loss of income due to the falling value of the dollar.

#### **Impact of Speculation**

Gordon Brown ignores the fact that over the last year investment banks have been using oil as a "hedge" against the falling value of the dollar. Lehman Brothers, the investment bank, has estimated that oil is at least 30% overpriced because of an influx of money into the oil market from investment funds looking for safe commodities to invest in. It believes that "hot" money accounts for between \$20 to \$30 of the recent increase in oil prices and that about \$40 billion has been invested in the sector so far this year — equal to all the money pumped into oil last year.

#### **Unexploited Oil**

The American government recently halted work to exploit Arctic oil in Alaska, on the pretext that environmental concerns outweigh the energy need. This is very curious; since the Bush Administration has an extremely weak environmental record, hasn't signed up to the Kyoto Treaty, and doesn't mind if other oil producing countries are not carbon neutral! This underlines the point that oil is increasingly becoming strategically more important and the countries that can retain as much independence as possible stand to gain the strongest political power.

It is worth noting that 30% of all US army expenditure is on oil, to fuel its tanks, jets and their weapons (the British army has a similarly high percentage), yet Western rulers arrogantly call for Muslim countries to continue funding the killing of Muslims around the world.

It is a sad irony that the Muslim world possesses the worlds most strategic commodity, as well as manpower, gold, uranium, plutonium and other precious resources, and yet it is the subject of invasions and embargoes, sanctions and political demands. The West's dependence on oil has never been fully utilised by an independent state with a strong political vision.

Gordon Brown's arrogant statements encapsulate the relationship of the Western world with the Muslim countries. For decades, Muslim rulers have been selling oil for pennies, allowing the West to grow, develop, invade and control the Muslim world. Worse still, the Muslim rulers have been cushioning the West from economic shocks, for example the OPEC increased oil supply after 9-11 when the American stock markets reported a record one day fall; they also increased oil supply before the Iraq war, and continued to supply a hostile army after the Iraq invasion.

It is worth noting that 30% of all US army expenditure is on oil, to fuel its tanks, jets and their weapons (the British army has a similarly high percentage), yet Western rulers arrogantly call for Muslim countries to continue funding the killing of Muslims around the world. The economic pendulum is swinging from the established economic powers away to new forces. While Europe and America face recession as well as negative forces such as stagflation (inflation coupled with negative growth), the Muslim world is in a relatively strong position. As an example a Forbes analyst stated in its 2008 Investing Guide:

"So flush are these countries (Arabian Gulf) that oil could drop below \$70 a barrel for the next ten years and still there would be economic growth" Another policy analyst for a leading financial institution noted the effect of OPEC holding back the supply of oil.

"As oil and other fuels become a more and more precious resource, OPEC countries, China, Russia and others will begin holding back oil, instead of putting it into the market...That's going to be devastating.."

It is high time the Muslim world returned back to the Khilafah system,

basing its currency and therefore the price of oil to the Gold Standard, choosing carefully who it trades with, and using its commodities and resources to dictate policy in its favour. Recent events should give Muslims confidence that the real economic power lies in their hands - what is lacking is a political will and determination to use it.

**Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain has recently published an investigation into the Oil crisis entitled "The Oil Crisis and the Khilafah Solution" available as a free download from [www.hizb.org.uk](http://www.hizb.org.uk)**



Kamal Abu Zahrah

# The Sublime Values of the Shariah

## Why is the Shariah being attacked?

The Sharee'ah has been portrayed as a mere set of brutal punishments by the media and the government to present Islam as a backward solution. The motivation behind this in the West is to immunize their own societies from Islam and as well to pressure the Muslim community to reject the return of Shariah via the Caliphate or pressure them to be silent about their demands. Even though the call for the Shariah is focused upon the Muslim world the West fears its return there and that is why it is being demonised today as the results of recent polls in Muslim countries indicating mass support for Shariah and Khilafah are still fresh in their minds. As for the Muslim response, far from being backward, we should use this opportunity to show non Muslims that the Shariah is not just a set of harsh punishments but a complete value based system that can address diverse problems like crime, poverty, education and healthcare and many other societal issues and challenges. This is also an excellent opportunity for the Muslim community to learn about their system and build their confidence in the Islamic political solution and amplify their call for the re-establishment of the Khilafah.

## Is the Shariah only punishments?

The Shariah is a complete system of life and not only confined to a set of rules or punishments. The Shariah is in actuality composed of the following elements which emanate from the Islamic rational basis i.e. 'Aqeedah. They are:

- i. values
- ii. rules and
- iii. punishments

All three elements combine to bring peace and stability in society and so

cannot be separated or depicted as merely a set of punishments. According to Ash-Shatibi, the great Maliki jurist who specialised in the theory of Shariah law: 'The meaning of Shariah is the restriction of the legally capable (mukallafin) by prescribing limits in respect to their actions, statements and beliefs.' (Muwafaqaat, v.1, p.88). According to 'Allamah at-Tahaawuni, an

unemployment and low school attainment. Rather the real causes are freedom and the values of individualism and materialism that it spawns. Thus, even though the government has passed on average one law every three days since Labour came to power they have failed to be tough on crime or the causes of crime. However, the Shariah contains values which function as

**The laws in the West not only fail to deal with crime but contribute to its increase by the fact that they are based on values which are bringing society down in the first place.**

expert on Islamic terminology: 'The Shariah are the rules legislated for the servants whether they relate to the mode of actions or beliefs.' (Kashaaf istilahaat al-funoon, under word 'shariah'). So one can see the Shariah is not defined only in terms of punishments but as rules relating to actions and beliefs of people. Consequently, these rules are holistic and comprehensive. For ease of comprehension we have divided them into the aforementioned elements. To understand how Shariah effectively addresses society's problems it is important to appreciate the operation of all three elements in relation to problems in society in a holistic manner. To illustrate this point let us see the holistic approach of Shariah with regards to crime which is a problem spiraling out of control in the West.

## The Values

Crime is rampant in western societies due to the values in society and not the superficial reasons that are cited such as homelessness, drug addiction, poverty,

preventors of crime and the violation of peoples rights. The following are a few examples:

- a) Taqwa (Fear of God): The first deterrent to crime is the individual himself and his conscience. That is why the Muslim, due to his A'qeedah, knows he is accountable to Allah (swt) before he is accountable to society. He knows that no leaf falls from a tree except that his Lord knows which leaf fell from which tree and what time. He (swt) said: *'And with Him are the keys of the Ghaib (all that is hidden), none knows them but He. And He knows whatever there is in (or on) the earth and in the sea; not a leaf falls, but he knows it. There is not a grain in the darkness of the earth nor anything fresh or dry, but is written in a Clear Record.'* [TMQ 6:59] This belief deters him from engaging in many actions even though he may be able to escape the law which is a calculation that is frequently made in the West by many who would commit crimes; ie do it if you can get away with it. Hence, according to one newspaper

report published 2nd September 2007 under the heading 'The untouchables' there were 3,000 crimes committed in 2007 by individuals who could not be convicted even though the evidence was there to secure a conviction. The problem was that these 3,000 crimes (of which 66 were sex offences) were committed by children of and under the age of 10! According to another statistic 6 out of 10 teenagers in poor areas in the UK think that crime pays. This is the type of society that the West is creating and the future is looking bleak if these statistics are anything to go by.

b) **Morals:** In the West it is not the law's business to pry into the morals of the people, hence we see the immorality that leads to crimes such as rape. Islam states that morals such as trust (amanah) or justness ('adl) are paramount. The Prophet (saw) said: **'He has no faith the one who lacks trust.'** (Musnad of Ahmed Ibn Hambal). The West pays lip service to these but undermines them by the other values of individualism which teaches selfishness and greed. That is why politicians in the West are the most distrusted of people in society even though their job description requires them to be the most upright and trustworthy.

c) **Collective responsibility:** In the West a Citizen is not legally obliged to stop crimes that are happening in front of them to the extent that one is not legally obliged to help even a drowning infant and if one does and it goes wrong somehow then that individual can be held to blame by the law. This is in stark contrast to Islam where Muslims are OBLIGED to forbid the munkar (evil) around them. The Allah (swt) informed: *"(The believers whose lives Allah (SWT) has purchased are) those who repent to Allah (SWT), who worship Him, who praise Him, who fast (or go out in Allah (SWT)'s Cause), who bow down (in prayer), who prostrate themselves (in prayer), who enjoin (people) for Al-Ma'ruf (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam has ordained) and forbid (people) from Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief, polytheism of all kinds and all that Islam has forbidden), and who observe*

*the limits set by Allah (SWT). And give glad tidings to the believers."* [TMQ 9:112]

d) It is reported that during the reign of Umar b. al-Khattab (ra) a man came to a house and cried for water. The residents of that house failed to respond to his call and the man died. Umar then ordered the family to pay blood money (diyyah) to the man's relatives. (Reported by Ahmad b. Hambal)

#### The Rules

The laws in the West not only fail to deal with crime but contribute to its increase by the fact that they are based on values which are bringing society down in the first place. Laws in the West are legislated to facilitate individual freedom whilst ignoring the interests of society as a whole. Hence, greed, promiscuity, alcohol, and indecent behavior are all protected by the force of law. Is it any wonder that crime is rising in the West. In contrast the Shariah has prescribed rules which not only forbid the values which lead to crime but also forbid the avenues to crime. For example:

a) **Sanctity of life and property:** In the West a person is taken to the brink then he is told that an act is an offence. For example a person is allowed to take cannabis, get hooked on alcohol and gambling and then suddenly when he feels compelled to steal or kill to feed this addiction he is told such a action is a criminal offence. The Shariah in Islam stops the avenues to crime by forbidding and criminalizing not only the crime but also the causes of crime. He (swt) says: *'O you who believe! Intoxicants, gambling...are an abomination of Shaitân's handiwork. So completely avoid them in order that you may be successful.'* [TMQ 5:90]

b) **Respect for the honor and dignity of women:** In the West women are treated as sexual objects whose femininity is used to sell products and agitate the sexual instinct in an unregulated manner and then people are told rape is a crime. Is it any wonder that one in four women in the West has been raped or a rape has been attempted on her? The Shariah prescribed rules such as dress code for

women, rules of non mixing in private space, lowering the gaze etc to protect the honour and dignity of women by prohibiting the means to its violation.

#### The Punishments

The Shariah, having laid down a set of values and rules has then prescribed a set of harsh punishments to protect these values and rules and deter people from violating them. The philosophy on which the Islamic penal system is based is the need to protect the society as a whole thereby protecting the individual as a result via harsh deterring punishments with a high evidential burden and due process to prevent the miscarriage of justice, unlike the barbaric lenient prison sentences we see in the West where murderers and rapists are let loose in society within a couple of years only to commit even more grave and heinous crimes. So punishments are deliberately harsh to prevent crime and send a message out to society that the values of life, property and chastity are sacrosanct. With regards to the death penalty He (swt) says: *And there is (a saving of) life for you in Al-Qisâs (the Law of Equality in punishment), O men of understanding.'* [TMQ 2:179] The Shariah protects life, religion, human dignity, property and the mind and such that it ensures stability and prosperity of society. The Prophet (saw) said: **"A hadd acted upon in the earth is better for the place of the earth than it raining over them for forty mornings."** (Reported by Ibn Majah) The reference to the rain for forty mornings refers to abundance and the prospect of a good harvest in respect to which the Prophet (saw) says the Shariah is even better.

#### Conclusion

Muslim communities in the West need to appreciate the bigger picture of this attack on Shariah, understand why its happening now, learn the arguments to defend it as outlined above and continue supporting and voicing their demand for the re-establishment of the Khilafah in the Muslim lands which will implement the Shariah holistically with its values, rules and punishments.

Dr Nasreen Nawaz

# Does Islam Oppress the Woman?



*"These are facts: The more Islamic a state is, the more its women are shrouded and confined..." - Peter Hitchens - Mail on Sunday*

*"The Hijab...immediately suggests a belief system in which women are inferior to men which is intolerable here." - Minette Marrin - The Times*  
*"(Regarding the Islamic dress)...the values these outfits imply are repulsive and insulting to me. I find these clothes to be physical manifestations of outdated traditional practices...that oppress and victimize women,*

*sometimes in the most degrading, cruel and barbaric of ways." - Deborah Orr - The Independent*

For decades if not centuries, the "Muslim woman" has been the poster-girl representing the oppression of women globally. The term "Shariah" when coupled with the word "Women", often conjures up images or phrases such as: second-class citizen, discrimination, injustice, violence, inferior to men, patriarchal, insignificant in society, and enslaved to men. However, the fact that globally, female converts to Islam

outnumber male converts (in some Western countries by 4:1); or the fact that there has been an exponential growth of women adorning the hijab and jilbab, even in the West; or the fact that poll after poll of the Muslim world in recent years show increasing numbers of Muslim women wishing to see the application of the Shariah in their lands, should at least question the soundness of this perception of the treatment of women within Islam.

So, does Islam oppress the woman and if not then from where do such

## Islam does not believe in securing individual freedom but aims to protect other values within the society – values such as chastity, honour and respect of men and women alike...

perceptions regarding its treatment of women arise? In this, the first of a two part article, we will explore two arguments often presented by the West as proofs of Islam's oppression of women: (1) The current injustices facing women in the Muslim world and Muslim communities in the West; (2) Islam's restriction of the freedom of choice of the woman in her dress, relationships and lifestyle.

(1) Injustices facing women in the Muslim world and Muslim communities of the West:

Undoubtedly, the current reality facing millions of Muslim women in the Muslim world as well as hundreds here in Britain is a dark one - forced marriages; honour killings; thousands of women in the subcontinent hospitalized each year from nitric acid thrown onto their faces for refusing a marriage suitor or over dowry or marital disputes. Islam has often gained recognition as the common causal factor to all these injustices against women but even a brief study of its rules would highlight that such actions are abhorrent in the religion. They result from non-Islamic tribal or traditional cultural practices of communities. In addition, these practices have been provided fertile ground to grow and flourish by dictatorial, incompetent regimes that currently plague the Muslim world. These governments have turned a blind eye to these heinous traditional customs, allowing many such crimes to go unpunished. Furthermore, they have directly instigated injustices against women - rape victims languish in jails, women face dire poverty, poor access to education, healthcare, employment opportunities and political rights. Some of these states have been associated with Islam but a close look at their ruling structures, laws and constitutions show them to be monarchies, tribal

systems, secular dictatorships or republics - structures that all place sovereignty of the law in the hands of human beings and hence are at complete odds with the Islamic ruling system, the Khilafah that places sovereignty in legislation in the hands of the Creator with laws extracted purely from the Islamic texts.

In contrast, the rights prescribed to women within the Islamic texts are clear: the right to education, employment, the vote, political participation, choice in marriage and the right to divorce, the rights of citizenship on par with the men of society and importantly, the right to respect and protection of her life and honour. However, unlike Western societies where women often had to battle the system to secure their rights, the rights afforded to women in the societies of Islamic history were dependent upon Islamic rule: the Khilafah system. When the application of this system weakened or worse still was removed from existence in 1924, then these rights could not be guaranteed and Muslim women fell prey

to the grave injustices of these tribal customs, autocratic regimes, and incorrect interpretations and misapplications of the Islamic texts.

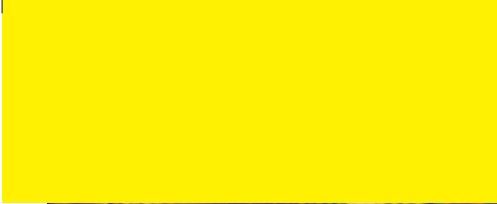
(2) Islam's restriction of the freedom of choice of the woman:

One of the arguments presented by the West as to why the Shariah oppresses the woman is that the laws are restrictive towards the woman, do not secure for her, her personal freedom or sexual freedom and deny her choice - they quote the dress code, the segregation and prohibition of socialising between the sexes, and the severe punishments for fornication or adultery.

The underlying problem here, has been the method of study of Islam. Some have examined individual Shariah laws in isolation of what the comprehensive Islamic system seeks to achieve for society. Others have judged the Islamic values and laws against the standard of Western secular values and laws. Any discrepancies are often labeled as oppressive by default without examining and comparing the overall impact of these values and laws upon society. In essence there has been a historical precedence of studying Islam through "Euro-centric" glasses. In this present argument regarding Islam and women, there are echoes of a colonial past: Lord Cromer, the British General Consul of







Egypt during its occupation in the 19th century, once wrote, "The Egyptians should be persuaded or forced into imbibing the true spirit of Western civilization" and that to achieve this, it was essential to change the position of women in Islam, for it was Islam's degradation of women, expressed in the practices of veiling and segregation, that was the "fatal obstacle" to the Egyptian's "attainment of that elevation of thought and character which should accompany the introduction of Western civilization". However, these liberal values come wrapped in their own set of problems. For example, they have given license to the exploitation of the bodies of women through the pornographic, advertising and entertainment industries that have cheapened the status of women generally within society. When you cheapen the status of women, abhorrent actions such as sexual harassment, abuse, and even rape may become one step less abhorrent for some men as evident by the escalating rates of these crimes within Western societies. According to the British Crime Survey 2007, 230 women were raped every day in the UK. According to the British Crime Survey 2004, one in four women in the UK has faced some form of sexual assault since the age of 16. The US Department of Justice has reported figures regarding sexual assault in the US that indicate that a woman is sexually assaulted every 2 minutes. Within these societies, how much "Choice" does a woman really have to engage in basic actions such as travel, work, and education, without fear of harassment or harm?

In addition, sexual freedom has spurred a culture of promiscuity and spiralling

rates of teenage pregnancies, abortions, STD's and adultery, resulting in the breakdown of marriages and families. According to a government independent advisory group on sexual health, there has been a 63% increase in STD's over the last decade. Furthermore, if a society nurtures a mindset of individual choice above all else then it must also understand the consequences - the "choice" of a man to father children from different women and take no physical or emotional responsibility for child or mother; the "choice" of a parent to neglect the upbringing of his or her child in order to pursue their own personal interests; the "choice" of individuals to neglect the care of an elderly parent or relative in order to focus on the desires of their own lives.

Islam does not believe in securing individual freedom but aims to protect other values within the society - values such as chastity, honour and respect of men and women alike, strong marriages, strong family units where every child is born within wedlock, knowing its father and mother and knowing who is responsible for its financial, physical and emotional welfare. It also believes in the cooperation of men and women within society - in education, economics, politics and societal life in general. It does not simply look at what will ensure maximum pleasure for individuals within society but what is best for the harmony, safety, and respect for the community as a whole. The Prophet (saw) said, "The example of those who maintain Allah's limits (hudood) and those who surpass them is like the example of those who share a boat. Some would occupy its upper deck and some its lower deck. The occupants of the lower deck would have to go to the upper deck to have access to the water. If they said, why don't we drill a hole in our part (to directly access the water) and do not cause any inconvenience to those above us. If those on the upper deck let them do what they wanted then all of the passengers would sink. However, if they prevented them from doing so then all would be saved."

It believes that sexual freedom and the

sexualisation of society produces a culture of promiscuity and adultery that creates an obstacle in their cooperation and harms the values it seeks to protect within society. It therefore sets down various laws, rules and limitations to regulate the relationship between men and women in society to try and ensure that the triggering of the sexual desire and sexual relations are restricted to marriage and kept away from public life. The dress code (the khimar (headscarf) and jilbab), the prohibition of the socializing between the sexes, the prohibition of a man and woman being in seclusion and the severe punishments for fornication, adultery and slander against the reputation of an individual are examples of such laws. It does not believe in the idea that a woman can be viewed in any manner according to the "freedom" or "choice" of the man but obliges society to honour her and view her with respect. The Prophet (saw) said, "The world and all things in the world are precious but the most precious thing in the world is a virtuous woman." The use of the woman's body to sell any product or service is therefore naturally prohibited.

The aim being to produce a society where women can interact with men and have an active public life that is productive but also safe and based upon mutual respect.

In Part 2 (next issue) we will examine the argument that Islam discriminates against women and is a betrayal of gender equality due to it prescribing different rights, duties and laws for men and women in particular issues, e.g. roles and rights in marriage and family life, divorce laws, testimony and inheritance laws, dress-code, polygamy, and denying the woman the position of ruler of a state.

Adnan Khan

# Disaster Capitalism

Capitalism's ability to continually plunge into crisis raises the spectre that the free economy works only with the leg-up provided by the state.

## Introduction

The world is once again in the midst of a global crisis which began with the collapse of sub-prime market in the US and has now engulfed the world. The 'Credit crunch' as it has come to be known brought panic and turmoil in the summer of 2007 to the world's financial markets causing the US housing market bubble to burst. The crisis threatens a worldwide economic recession, potentially bringing to a halt more than a decade of increasing prosperity and employment for Western economies and according to the IMF, potentially wiping a staggering \$1 trillion off of the value of the world economy.

The supposedly sophisticated models used by major investment banks predicted a financial market crash was likely only once in 10,000 years. They said the same, however, about the stock market crash of 1987, the collapse of the hedge fund Long Term Capital Management in 1998 and the sub-prime crisis. What is noticeable since the development of Capitalism, is that the regular boom and bust, recession, depression, crash, crisis and collapse, whether in Dutch Tulips or in dot.com companies, they do occur regularly. Financial crisis has become such a regular occurrence, many in the West consider the periodical market failure as part and parcel of Capitalism, and the Economist in its analysis of the crisis encapsulated this attitude: "excess and calamity are part of the package of Western finance. And still it is worth it."

## The Bubble Economy - is it worth it?

Many analysts and experts have cited an array of reasons for what caused the crisis, these tend to range from lax regulation, little transparency, the manner in which credit ratings agencies assessed risk as well as the complex securitization of sub-prime loans. Although such factors all contributed to the crisis, to only view such a crisis in this way avoids any discussion on wider related issues and results in the study of the credit crunch crisis in isolation of previous crisis.

The current crisis like those of previous crisis in the last 200 years follows a familiar pattern, Like a bubble it continues to expand until it reaches bursting point, with all participants only realising the irrationality of contributing to the bubble once its burst. There are four stages of such bubbles:

- The first is the development or innovation of new technology or product, in the past this included railways, telecoms, ships and dotcoms and currently innovations in the financial industry.
- The second stage is where society is bombarded with information of how such a development will completely change lifestyles and the way we live. The South sea bubble of 1720 reached astronomical levels when the South sea company convinced the British public that their monopoly to trade with South America meant they would return with riches and booty, a wave of 'speculating frenzy' sent its shares spiraling upwards as 'life would never be the same again.'
- The third stage is where speculative frenzy turns into irrationality that drives

a bubble to astronomical levels bordering on stupidity. People from all walks in life jump on the bandwagon. The public and sceptics are told, markets will not crash as this time its different, the 'fundamentals' are solid and things can only get better with this new innovation and development. The development of complex financial securitisation products such as collateralised debt obligations and mortgage debt obligations where debt is sold many times over was heralded as a landmark innovation which spreads risk as never before. Again the financial industry continued to explain 'this time is different, the fundamentals are solid.'

- The final part of the bubble is when the realisation dawns that the new innovation or development in reality is not a landmark occurrence as originally thought, the money that was poured in initially which inflated the bubble will not bring the original returns which all were duped into believing, at this point the bubble bursts and the repercussions, as history has shown, have been disastrous. The excesses of the 1920's led to the great depression, the dot.com bubble burst when companies began to go bust when their inflated promises would take 50 years to develop. The collapse of new financial Inc in the US in April 2007, the largest Sub-prime company was the beginning of the end of the US housing bubble; again we were told the US housing market had strong fundamentals.

Those responsible for the speculative bubble of 2007 could not conceive that one day it would burst. That was where their arrogance kicked in. Their activities were making massive profits, a good chunk of which were being paid out in



seven-figure bonuses that kept property markets humming. Even when cracks started to appear, they blamed everyone but themselves.

This crisis has proven very clearly that the apparent strength of the financial markets was illusionary. The happy-go-lucky mood evaporated instantly, with the write-down of losses accompanied by the sackings of executives. It is a principal of Capitalism that there is never too much of anything: never too much growth, never too much speculation, never too high a salary, never too many flights, never too many cars, never too much trade and never too much Oil. What Capitalism has created is speculation, recklessness, greed, arrogance and over-indulgence. This is why every boom is followed by a bust and will continue to do so.

#### The Khilafah Plc

The Islamic system has a completely different philosophy for the economy and as a result it treads a path completely different to Capitalism:

1. The Islamic economic system is about people and their needs, not economic growth. Muhammad (saw) said: "The son of Adam has no better right than that he would have a house wherein he may live and a piece of cloth whereby he may hide his nakedness and a piece of bread and some water" (Tirmidhi). This forms the basis of the Economic system of Islam, all policies and rules are geared towards achieving such ends. Islam focuses on the needs of the people which this hadith outlined rather than merely increasing GDP.

2. To achieve such ends the state has been ordained by Islam to play a direct role in the economy and not leave things completely to the free market. Ibn 'Abbas Narrated as reported by Abu Dawud that Muhammad (saw) said: "Muslims are partners in three things: in water, pastures and fire." Based upon this hadith the state takes direct ownership of the fire based resources such as oil, gas, refineries, electricity plants as well as the water resources. In this way society will not be open to abuse by private

companies who make a killing from such key essential utilities.

3. The Islamic economy does not have a dual economy - a large financial sector where essentially bets takes place on what will happen in the real economy, where production of goods etc takes place. The financial sector consists of financial instruments such as stocks and shares, derivatives and securitised products which apart from involving interest (Riba) involve transactions over items which do not require partners to have ownership of them.

4. The Islamic economy is based upon the real economy and as a result all its rules are based upon ensuring wealth circulation continually occurs. The prohibition of interest means investing wealth can only take place by placing ones wealth in the real economy as there is no other place to invest, if one keeps their money in a bank account (where there will be no interest) it will be liable for taxation at the end of the tax year (Zakat at 2.5%). Taxation in Islam is wealth based rather than income, hence under Islam there would be no income tax, VAT, road tax etc. This means individuals will have much more disposable income which can practically only be invested in the real economy, this will create a multiplier effect as money will circulate from person to person. It is interest, the financial markets and direct taxation that hinder wealth circulation.

5. The Islamic system clearly lays down the rules for ownership and how to dispose of assets, these have been outlined in general principles which can be extended through analogy to new realities. This will bring the much needed stability to the economy absent in the West who continually change the goal posts with free markets and the free economy. After every crisis or crash the debate always centres on how much the government should be involved in the economy and how much should be left to the free market. Currently it is state intervention which is keeping the Capitalist economy afloat, through bailouts and the involvement of Sovereign wealth funds banks have been saved from collapsing. It was these same banks who for decades have argued for deregulation.

#### Conclusions

The Global credit crunch has once again highlighted the fragility of Capitalism, as the fallout from the credit crunch and the wider economic crisis continues, demands for alternatives are certain to grow and it is here the Islamic economic model represents a compelling case for an alternative economic system. The Islamic system is more than the prohibition of interest and Islamic finance and unlike Capitalism places the needs of the people not economic growth as the central issue that requires answers and policies.



Conference 2008

# KHILAFAH

## The Need for Political Unity

The destruction of the Islamic Khilafah State over 80 years ago marked the beginning of dividing the Muslim World into countless nation states governed by a plethora of kings, dictators and western backed 'democrats'. Today three major regions of the Muslim world are under occupation, Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan. Oil and food crisis has pushed millions of people into starvation. Sectarian divisions are fuelled by occupying powers to further divide and weaken us.

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