

A short essay on Islam and The oneness of Religion of God

The Prophet -Founder of Islam, Muhammad was born in Mecca around 570 AD. In His early childhood, His father died and He was brought up in a paternal uncle's home. From early youth, He was distinguished as an honest man. He had His first intimation from the Holy Spirit at 40 and rose to call men to God, Allah in Arabic. All the heathens, Jews and Christians rose against Him. He had less than 100 followers in the first 12 years. His enemies plotted to kill Him. He migrated to Medina [Yathrib] in 622 AD. [This event is called the Hegira and is the beginning of Islamic Calendar. This Calendar is based on the rotation of the moon around the earth in 29.5 days, and is called a Lunar Calendar.] Muhammad and His followers returned to Mecca in 630, they destroyed the heathen temple, the Kaaba, turned it and the area around it into the world mosque, the house of worship for all Muslims.

Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, gradually earned the respect of peoples and Islam grew in fame, power and wealth. Islam means submission to the Will of God. Through this belief and a harsh spiritual and moral discipline and through God's injunction "The believers are brothers"- Islamic Brotherhood united the warring tribes into a firm unbreakable community under Muhammad.

Muhammad passed away at 63 in the year A.D. 632 and 4 men with the appellation Caliph succeeded him one after the other, each for a short time. The third caliph, Othman, who ruled from 644 to 656, ordered the Word of God revealed to Muhammad be gathered in a book. The book named *The Qur'an* and meaning the recitation, contained solely the Word of God as preserved by certain believers. [Allah had made it clear that the Word is "a revelation from the Lord of the worlds." and goes on "And if he [Muhammad] had fabricated against Us some of the sayings, We would certainly have seized him by the right hand, Then We would certainly have cut off his aorta. And not one of you could have withheld Us from him." (The Qur'an, 69:43-47) It is of paramount importance that after this, God says "And most surely it is a reminder unto those who guard." This reality is emphatically pronounced in all the Holy Scriptures of the past and present, though with different verbatim.[Muhammad's words in all aspects of life covering the spiritual and physical entities, divine wisdom, humanity and its individual and social life, prophecies and more are gathered in many volumes and are called holy Traditions.]

Islam rapidly spread throughout Middle East and North Africa. The caliphs waged Jihad (holy war) and the Muslims defeated the Persian Sassanid Empire and captured most part of the Christian Byzantine before they were stopped in 732 through the Battle of Tours. Islam had the entire civilized world of the time under its rule and established the greatest empire of the human history so far. Their empire stretched from the Great Wall of China to the western parts of Africa and Europe for 500 years.

Other than the short history mentioned above, there are several points of interest, which will benefit us in studying this religion.

1-Islam appeared in a desert far from the centers of major civilizations and among the heathens. Thus, The Qur'an talks about the religions initiated in the Middle East like the Judaism and Christianity and names some 37 major and minor Prophets and does not refer to those in Mid-Asia, Far-Asia or other parts of the world. The Book has the highest regard for many of the prophets and religious groups especially for Christ, Moses, Ibrahim, Joseph and many more. Jesus is called "the Spirit of God" and Moses is applauded as "the Converser with God". The Qur'an makes it clear that the religion of Allah had always been Islam that is "submission to the Will of God" and every one of the Prophets and Messengers has been Muslim. We notice that the Qur'an establishes not only the oneness of God, the Creator, but the oneness of the Prophets and the religion of God as well.

2-The Qur'an makes it explicitly known that any Prophet or Messenger of God has a mission to educate man in knowledge and love of God, urge him to obey the laws and ordinances set down by the Mouthpiece of God, and nurture human virtues to change a natural man into a heavenly spiritual being. In short, Allah wants man to grow spiritually to resemble his Creator, more and more every day, and in accordance to the impulse and the spiritual impetus released in

every Dispensation of Providence that is the “Progressive Revelation of God”. Thus, the spiritual tenets of all religions are in the same direction, though in a progressive manner. The social laws and ordinances are based on the condition of the individual and the society, and are measured and prescribed according to the needs of the time, the social status of people and the exigencies of the time.

3-The Prophets of God, one and all have a triple duty. Allah proclaims: “O Prophet! Surely We have sent you as a witness, and as a bearer of good news and as a warner.” (The Qur’an 33:45) Each of the Prophets had these three responsibilities. Muhammad was sent to the people who “were not warned before”, them “whose ancestors were not warned before”. (The Qur’an 36) and this is one of the reasons that Islam, in regard of the social and individual laws and ordinances resembles Judaism. While, from the point of knowledge of God and spirituality, that is being “a witness to the Almighty Creator”, it is much more progressive than the religions before it. One should study this part of the Faith of the One True God, with unbiased mind, thoroughly and deeply to acknowledge this truth.

4-The triple duties enjoined on the Prophets and Messengers come to a close by the Revelation of Muhammad. Allah says: “And We have not sent you but to all the men as a bearer of good news and as a warner, but most men do not know.” (The Qur’an 34:28) This point is of paramount importance.

Time, in respect to the Revelation of God and spiritual evolution of man, individually and collectively, is divided into two great cycles: The Cycle of Prophecy and the Cycle of Fulfillment. The Cycle of Prophecy started from the time man appeared physically on the earth. There were numerous Minor Prophets preaching the preliminary religions, in fact giving the Alphabet of knowledge of God and spirituality. Later on, there appeared Major Prophets in every part of the planet, who came with the Word of God and established different religions, many of which still living in the hearts and souls of men. The notion of the “End of the World”, “End of the Age” and many more are the result of man’s misunderstanding and sometimes misinterpretation of the Scriptures. By the termination of the Cycle of Prophecy, the new “Cycle of Fulfillment” opens. Thus, Muhammad is the last “Warner” and “Bearer of the good news”. The “Cycle of Fulfillment” opened in 1844 Christian Calendar or 1260 Islamic Calendar. The Báb closed the Cycle of Prophecy, and Bahá’u’lláh ushered in the “Cycle of Fulfillment”. Thus God’s “Promise” to perfect the creation of man, individually and collectively, started in this Glorious Age and Era.

5-In the Qur’an, Allah condemns any kind of schism and sectarianism. He says: “...be not of the polytheists, of those who divided their religion and became sects, every sect rejoicing in what they had with them.” (30:31-32) Notwithstanding this “warning”, the Muslims walked in the path of other religious communities. In fact, they started schism from the moment Muhammad left them on this plane and passed to the other world!

6-Allah categorically sets a “term” or a “life-span” for every created thing. The material kingdom, vegetable kingdom, animal kingdom, human beings, nations, religious movements and every known and unknown entity in the creation come into existence for a “term” and not forever. All created things are “doomed” to die, change or get into another realm with a different form. Nothing lives forever but the Creator and what is with Him. Death overcomes anything created on a certain and pre-ordained moment. All are doomed to perish after they accomplish their task and finish their “term”. Once the “term” is completed, death or “doom” “cannot be hold back...nor can come sooner,” even for a short while. (The Qur’an 34:28-30 and 7:34) [Here and in many other instances the Qur’an warns the people of the world including the Muslims to be at guard for the given “Promise”, mentioned in all the Holy Scriptures.] There are more than 30 verses in the Qur’an, explaining the “term” or the “Doom”, this eternal truth engulfing everything in creation.

7-The “Promise”, which is the “Covenant of God to protect, guide and look after His children, the humankind, the end result of God’s Creation” is referred to in different terms in every one of the Books of God, the Holy Scriptures of all religionists. It is referred to as the “Most Great Event” in man’s spiritual evolution. Having this reminded and emphasized in the Qur’an, Allah sets an exact date and time for the fulfillment of the well-known “Promise”. He repeats the “Promise” and as of the advent of Muhammad that is after the Islam is introduced and God “regulates the affairs from the heaven to the earth” (The Qur’an 32:5) which took 260 Lunar Years, God gives a “respite” of “one day” which is 1,000 Lunar Years to everyone in the world. Thus, the date would be 1260 Islamic Calendar, 1844 Christian Calendar. When we look in the Scriptures for the “Event” and the “Promise”, we come across many references and names such as “Dawn of a New

Day”, “the Day of God”, “the Latter Days”, “ the Day of the Most Great Revelation of God”, “the Day of Reckoning”, “the Day of Resurrection”, “the Day of the coming of the Kingdom of God on Earth”, “the Day of Unity of all Mankind”, [Which is promised in the Scriptures as the “Day of one flock and one shepherd” (Mentioned in *The New Testament*.) and the “Day of a Single Nation”, (The Qur’an 16:93) and the “Day of Creation of Man”. (The Qur’an 55:1-3) And finally, “the Day” when “the holy city, the new Jerusalem” that is the new Book and the new Universal Revelation of God “come down from God out of heaven”, the city which is not in need of the sun or the moon but “the glory of God and the Lamb would be its light”. (Revelation, 21)]

Epilogue

This salutary truth we maintain: that the religion of God, which is the expression of God’s Will through His Mouthpiece for certain age and era is one reality undivided and unchangeable in its essence but Progressive in its dealing with man, individually and socially. What has been revealed in different times and places, by different Messengers of God, and under different names, are but chapters of one Mother Book, or links of one Chain of Progressive Revelation of God. The role of those chapters and links has been preparing the human world for this Day and this Most Mighty Revelation.

This Most Mighty Revelation of God is to supply man with all it needs, individually and collectively, to pass through the most turbulent phase of its growth, its adolescence and coming of age.

Let us meditate on what Bahá’u’lláh reveals in the Most Holy Book: “Let none in this Day, hold fast to aught save that which hath manifested in this Revelation, Such is the decree of God, aforesaid and hereafter-a decree wherewith the Scriptures of the Messengers of old have been adorned. Such is the admonition of the Lord, aforesaid and hereafter-an admonition wherewith the preamble to the Book of Life hath been embellished, did ye but perceive it. Such is the commandment of the Lord, aforesaid and hereafter; beware lest ye choose instead the part of ignominy and abasement.”

To show the tie, which binds the revelation of God in different Dispensations, I just quote one of many passages in the holy Scriptures. This shows how Christ ties the last links of God’s Revelations to this Most Mighty One.

“And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying Rise and measure the Temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.²-But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given to the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.³-And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, closed in sackcloth.⁴-These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.⁵-And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.⁶-these have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in their days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.⁷-And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.⁸And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.⁹-And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.¹⁰-And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry and shall send gifts one to another, because these two prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth.¹¹-And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entereth into them, and they stood upon their feet: and great fear fell upon them which saw them,¹²-And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud: and their enemies beheld them.¹³-And the same hour was there a great earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted and gave glory to the God of heaven.¹⁴-The second woe is past; and behold the third woe cometh quickly.¹⁵-And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.¹⁶-And the four and twenty elders which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God.” <REVELATION, chapter 11>

One who is familiar with man’s religious history and knows what happened throughout the last 13 centuries, would readily see the appearance of Muhammad, the Dispensation of Islam, the major events in Islam, the duration of that

Dispensation, the role of 'A li, Muhammad's helpmate, successor and son-in-law, both in "sack-cloth". This event is called "the first woe". The rise of the Báb with Quddus, their martyrdom, the short duration of the Bábi Dispensation, referred to as "the second woe". And the greatest news in religious history, that is the advent of the Most Mighty Revelation of God in Bahá'u'lláh, called "the third woe", coming "quickly" to establish the Kingdom of God on earth, as prophesied: "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our lord". The remaining chapters of the Book of < REVELATION > are explaining every detail of the majesty of this Most Mighty Revelation, the advent of Bahá'u'lláh's proclamation to usher "the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth", the greatest Jubilee in human history.

Now we follow the text in detail though briefly:

1-Soon after the passing of Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, Arabs conquered the territory now called the Middle East. Omar, the second Caliph ordered the Muslims not to occupy nor disrespect "*the Temple and the altar*". The totality of domain even the city of Jerusalem went under the Islamic Caliphate, the Gentiles for the duration of the dispensation of Islam "*forty and two months*" which is, according to the Bible 1260 years.

2-God gives "*power unto*" His "*two witnesses*", Muhammad and 'Ali clothed in "*sack cloth*" to "*prophecy a thousand two hundred and threescore days*", or 1260 years, the duration of Islam. [This is foretold in the Qur'an chapter 32, versus 4, 5 and 6, as well. Respected reader may refer to <THE QUR'AN AND THE ETERNAL COVENANT OF GOD> for more enlightenment.]

3-"*These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.*" Meaning they are "*God's witnesses, olive trees and candlesticks*", that is, they would be the source of God's grace and His guiding light for the flock of God, as Christ was.

4-"*And if any man hurt them, fire proceedeth from their mouth and devoureth their enemies...*" This refers to the power given to Islam and Islamic authorities to announce the enemies as people of blasphemy and apostasy and condemn them to death. This has happened all through the Islamic Dispensation. Still, this practice is going on in some Islamic countries.

5-"*These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy:*" Muhammad made it clear that, versus the previous Dispensations, there would not be any minor Prophets in Islamic Dispensation. Even the Imams cannot claim prophethood. [Islamic clergy took this as an excuse to claim that Muhammad is the final Prophet of God!]

6-"*When they shall have finished their testimony, the beast...shall overcome them, and kill them...*" In a short time after Muhammad's passing, Muawiya the head of the Omayyads fought with 'Ali, occupied the seat of power, called himself the Caliph of Islam and changed the reality of Islam into an ugly worldly power. [Muhammad himself predicted this in a very famous and long Tradition; He said: "Soon a day comes upon my people when there will not remain from Islam but the name and from the Qur'an, but the shape..."]

The "*dead body of Islam*", they did not let be buried. They used its name and form to rule over men, especially in the Middle East and "*the streets of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt...*"

7-"*And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days (times, in the better translations.) and half...*" Once more the duration of Islam is emphasized: 1260 days or years.

8-"*And after three days and an half the Spirit from God entered into them, and they stood up upon their feet;...*" The Báb and Quddus, a descendant of Muhammad and his companion rose to proclaim the new Revelation of God, the Bábi Faith was born in 1260 A.H., 1844 A.D. [Let us remember the Qur'an praising God "Possessor of the highest rank, Lord of power [The Lord of the Throne] He makes the inspiration to light [reflects His Spirit] by His command upon whom He pleases of His servants, that he may warn(men) of the day of meeting." (40:15)]

9-"*And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud...*" [The Báb and Quddus were both called to sacrifice their lives in the path of the Author of the Most Great Revelation of God.]

10-"*The second woe is past: and, behold the third woe cometh quickly.*" Each of the advents are called a woe, because it alarms the peoples of the world by the renewal of religion which is the hardest upon the weak and misguided souls who believe their religion is the last and the only way to salvation; those who think that their prophet is the greatest and the only "way" to God!

11- “*The second woe*” passed by the Martyrdom of the two revived “*Witnesses of God*”, and “*the third woe*” came “*quickly*”. The Most Great Revelation of God came after 9 calendar years through the “first intimation” of God’s Spirit to Bahá’u’lláh in Tehran, Iran and after 19 calendar years through “The Most Great Jubilee”, the public Proclamation of Bahá’u’lláh in Baghdád in 1280 A.H. or 1963 A. D.

12- “*There were great voices in heaven, saying: The kingdoms of this world are become THE KINGDOMS OF OUR LORD. AND OF HIS CHRIST; AND HE SHALL REIGN FOR EVER AND EVER.*”

The Qur’an gives the same glad-tiding concerning that Day of the “*third woe*”. It says: “To whom belongs the kingdom this day? To Allah, the One, the subduer of all.” (40:16)

Let us give ear to Baha’u’llah: “**Great indeed is this Day! The allusions made to it in all sacred Scriptures as the Day of God attest to its greatness. The soul of every Prophet of God, of every divine Messenger, hath thirsted for this wondrous Day...(When) the Day Star of (God’s) Revelation manifested itself in the heaven of God’s Will,.. the Kingdom is God’s.**”

<Gleanings

from the Writings of Baha’u’llah>

Bahá’u’lláh [*The Glory of God*] and His herald Prophet, the Báb [*The Lamb of God*] will rule forever and ever. Their rule based on love, grace and justice, is preordained by God, and it runs through involvement of the totality of human kind, it is the true democracy.